

Music & Letters

A Quarterly Publication

Edited by

A. H. FOX STRANGWAYS

Price Five Shillings

Vol. XV No. I

January 1934

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JANUARY, 1934

Volume XV

No. I

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THESE letters come from a collection of 114 autograph letters of Beethoven belonging to Herr H. C. Bodmer in Zurich. With the exception of the last, which was printed in an auction catalogue, and of extracts from the third and fourth of them, they were published for the first time in *Corona* (Munich) in May, 1933. The owner has kindly granted permission for their translation here, in which Herr Herbert Steiner of Munich has given useful help, and the editor for the use of his notes, which are here abbreviated. Note (14) and a few other data have been most kindly supplied by Professor Otto Erich Deutsch of Vienna.

In the original German Beethoven's queer spelling and grammar are scrupulously preserved, and the words he wrote in Roman script are shown in italics, the breaks and dashes there are his, and they are clearly intended to keep together matter which is relevant. These have been embodied here in our ordinary punctuation.

No. 1. 28th Feb., 1812.

So in Saxony they say 'rude as a musician,' and I expect that's how it was with me—my jokes with you have now and then contained a few home-truths. To-day I can write only just what is necessary. You tell me my letter is glistening with good temper; the artist must be able to adapt himself to any mood, and so perhaps my good temper was a little bit put on. I'm not in a good temper just now: that

business of the Archduke Rudolf⁽¹⁾ has been a bad thing for me. If Heaven will only send patience till I can get abroad, I shall be able to get back to my real self again, which is the only possible happiness for man and, particularly, for artist. Patience, only; if I am denied everything else, I can still find myself again in Nature, and at once again in my heavenly art, too; Heaven's one true gift, this. Now that the first faint scents of spring are in the air my hopes revive. As for my health, I have had several bad attacks; Winter undoes for me half the good of the summer; still, I am better, and hope it will continue. You wrote me once a letter about 'a kind of symphony,'⁽²⁾ but I have mislaid it; it was the sort of idea that I have had myself too. Do send me at once the three songs of Goethe;⁽³⁾ I may perhaps be able to make use of them.* That you have no great sale here I can easily believe, but there are many things I much less care to believe; still, they are . . .

Are the Egmont⁽⁴⁾ songs not yet engraved? I never received the parcel of Mozart's Requiem and Don Giovanni, never all this time: Traeg never had it, and I never got it from you, since you always referred me to him; keep your promise in future about other things of the kind, that you were going to send me. The poems you sent will be made use of, and for that purpose they lie always ready to hand. That Mass!⁽⁵⁾ When will it be submitted to the devout Catholics?

Farewell. Think kindly of me, and when I am in your direction take care to be provided with better ducats⁽⁶⁾ than you have sent me; you must have got them from pirates, they come from all parts of the world.

Yours very truly,
Ludwig van Beethowen.

[address on envelope]

To Breitkopf and Hertel,
Leipzig.

[from] Ludwig van Beethowen, Pascolati's[†] House, Mölker
Bastei 1289.

* Not as a gift.

† Belonging to Baron Pasqualati.

(1) The Archduke Rudolf ('His Eminence' of letter 5) was Primate-designate of Hungary. Beethoven hurried to Vienna to pay his respects to his princely patron and pupil and was greeted with the 'thunderclap' that the appointment was not to be made. The 'bad thing' was the postponement of the journey to Leipzig, which upset his money arrangements.

(2) Härtel's letter is lost; it would have enabled us to decide whether it was the seventh or the eighth symphony that was referred to.

(3) 'Wonne der Wehmuth,' 'Sehnsucht' (Was zieht mir das Herz so?) and 'Mit einem gemalten Band.'

(4) The orchestral parts of the Overture appeared in Dec., 1810, the rest of

the music to the play in Jan. and Oct., 1812. These three dates are corrected from the editor's notes in accordance with Breitkopf u. Härtel's books.

(5) The C major, composed 1807, published Nov., 1812.

(6) Austria was bankrupt in 1811, the year before this letter. Beethoven used to demand his fees in the best currency he could get, and he preferred Dutch ducats.

No. 2. 1812.

P.P.

[pramissis pramittendis
‘after compliments’]

Mr Stoll⁽⁷⁾ has asked me to be surety for him with you for 4 louis-d'or which you are going to be so good as to advance him. He offers as security his salary from the Emperor Napoleon, and after you have investigated the matter and satisfied yourselves that it is all right, please tell me if you are able and willing to accept my surety. You have always been so obliging and friendly to me, and I am sure if you find there is any disadvantage to you in this matter—and it is quite outside my knowledge—you will not conceal it from me; and for my part I shall be ready, if ‘the papers are in order,’ as sailors say, to give surety for the 4 louis-d'or.

With kind regards,
Yours very truly,

L. v. Beethowen.

N.B.—I hope you will not show the contents of this letter to anybody, and that includes Oliva.⁽⁸⁾

[address on envelope]
To Messrs. Offenheimer.

(7) Joseph Ludwig, son of the well-known doctor, Maximilian Stoll, joint editor of the periodical *Prometheus* (1802) in which ‘Pandora’ and the first of the four settings of ‘Nur wer die Sehnsucht kennt’ were published. Beethoven had lately set Stoll's ‘An die Geliebte’ twice. After the surcease of ‘the luckless’ *Prometheus* Beethoven had put in a word for Stoll with the orientalist Hammer Purgstall, of which nothing came. Napoleon, at Vienna, was petitioned, and granted Stoll a salary of 500 Gulden in memory of his father.

(8) Franz Oliva had a post in the Bank of Offenheimer und Herz; he had quarrelled with Stoll.

No. 3. Feb., 1814.

Our Beethowen requests our Hartmann to be so good as to have his Akademie,⁽⁹⁾ that is to be held on Sunday the 27th inst. in the Redoutensaal, drawn attention to in our Observer. Besides the ‘Battle,’ which is already known, there will be a First Performance of a New Symphony and a New Vocal Trio.

Make no mistake about The Artist: he is out for interest on his

outlay. Experience has unfortunately taught him that that is the only one kind of way in which a man can be said really to 'interest' himself in True Art.

Yours ever,

Beethoven.

It is much to be wished that this could appear in your Ash Wednesday issue. Don't misunderstand the '*our*': I [am] much smitten with the adjective you tacked on to my name.

[address on envelope]

To von Hartmann, Esq.

(9) i.e., orchestral concert in the 'Redoutensaal' of the Hofburg, the memorable one of Feb. 27, 1814, in which were heard the Battle of Vittoria (first performed Dec., 1813, published in March, 1814), the seventh symphony (two years old), the eighth (first performance) and a vocal trio 'Tremate, empi,' (first also). The announcement appeared on the preceding Thursday, possibly also in the evening edition of Wednesday.

No. 4. Aug., 1814.

[To Friedrich Treitschke]⁽¹⁰⁾

Here, dear friend, is the letter from Prague⁽¹¹⁾ about my opera; you can make use of it, if you think well. As you have been so good to me, you will not [be] unwilling, at my request, to ask if I may have the use of the University Hall two or three times.

As soon as we know this, my brother thinks that everything else will be all right.

Dear brother poet, dear brother
in Apollo. Blessings on you.

Yours,

Beethoven.

(10) Sonnleithner was the librettist of *Leonore*, G. F. Treitschke of *Fidelio*.

(11) First performance there 21/11/14, under C. M. v. Weber, of *Fidelio* in its first form. The first performance of it in its second form was at the Kärntnertor theatre, Vienna, 23/5/14. The MS. was returned to Prague on Sept. 5, and this letter is about that time.

No. 5. May, 1823.

Dear Diabelli,⁽¹²⁾

Use only the Paris copy for your engraving; the other has other further mistakes. Please send me the proof⁽¹³⁾ straight here and I will send it back at once. *Be quick!* It serves them both right; they deserve it; but I do not like that sort of revenge. Please let me have four author's copies for myself, one of them on good paper for His Eminence.

Now one more favour, which I shall ask of you in a fortnight and only for a fortnight. Will you lend me, *then*, 300fl⁽¹⁴⁾ (Vienna currency). My illness, which has been aggravated by this horrible

lodging—yes, and on the top of that I've had sore eyes for three weeks—and by doctor's orders I was forbidden to write or read—that's the reason. To-day is the first time I have been able to use my eyes, and only very carefully, and not for long together.

Perhaps it won't be necessary at all. Be so kind as to tell me whether I may, in case of necessity, count upon you for this sum for a fortnight. The thing is, I have only one more work to finish and then I shall have money directly. So you need only expect this request from me if I should not be ready with the work by a specified time. Since it is not going to happen now, perhaps we can come to some agreement about it in the future. You can see from this to what a state these 'mercantile operations'⁽¹⁵⁾ with the Mass have reduced me: a tradesman must have some capital, but where from? In a word, everything has got into a mess, and I am more likely to have ruin than profit.* Neither my brother nor Herr Schindler—trust neither of them in what concerns me. One is as bad as the other, but each in a different way.

If there is anything you want to talk over with me, whatever it is, come to me myself. Bitter experience has taught me this too.

Your friend,

Beethoven.

I want an answer about that one point.⁽¹⁶⁾

* As far as I can see, there's no going back.

(12) Anton Diabelli was a partner in the firm of Cappi and Diabelli, Vienna. The date of the letter is the end of May, 1823. Great perturbation of spirit is betrayed by the handwriting of the original and the disjointed sentences.

(13)—of the C minor sonata, op. 111, published by Schlesinger (Paris and Berlin), Apr., 1823. As this was full of misprints, Beethoven had a new edition made by Cappi; and corrected his own proofs.

(14) From 1811 to 1857 the Austrian currency was in a chaotic condition. There were two bases of reckoning: (1) Viennese currency, *Wiener Währung*, 1811 (in bank notes, called Redemption Bonds, *Einlösungscheine*, 1812, or Discount Bonds, *Antizipationscheine*, 1813) which was the usual one for small purchases, and (2) Imperial Currency, *Conventionsmünze*, 1753, which was the same as the Dutch currency. 100 florins W.W. were worth 40 florins C.M. The coinage of C.M. was as follows:—

| fl. | kr. | £ | s. | d. |
|------|-----------------------|-----|-----|-------------|
| 27.5 | = 1 schilling | ... | ... | 11 |
| 60 | = 1 florin, or gulden | ... | 2 | 0 |
| 2 | 0 = 1 thaler | ... | 4 | 0 |
| 4 | 30 = 1 ducat | ... | 9 | 0 |
| 7 | 26 = 1 livre | ... | 14 | 10 <i>½</i> |
| 9 | 45 = 1 guinée | ... | 19 | 6 |
| 13 | 20 = 1 louis d'or | ... | 1 | 6 8 |

The rate of exchange varied, of course, but on the average a florin was worth 2s. 0*½*d.; it has been taken here as 2s. There may be various views on the purchasing power of the pound sterling in 1825; but it is reasonable to suppose that it was three times as great then as now, and for comparison of prices the following figures for Vienna 1825 should be tripled for London 1933.

MUSIC AND LETTERS

| | | fl. | kr. | £ | s. | d. |
|---|----------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|----|
| Cooked Meals. | Veal | 28 | | 11 | 1 | 1 |
| | Loin | 26 | | 10 | 1 | 1 |
| | Beef | 20 | | 8 | | |
| | Calf's liver | 15 | | 6 | | |
| Hotel board, including the usual drinks (one day) | | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Respectably furnished room (one month) | | 10 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Salaries (yearly)— | | | | | | |
| | School assistant | 40 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | Provincial music master... | 500 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| | Second Court organist ... | 500 | 0 | 50 | 0 | 0 |
| | Second kapellmeister ... | 600 | 0 | 80 | 0 | 0 |

Fees for eight concerts given by Paganini in Vienna up to 1828, 8,000fl., average per concert

1,000 0 100 0 0
 Beethoven, in letter 2, meant by 'louis d'or' probably not the Austrian souverain d'or of 13fl. 20kr., certainly not the French louis d'or (of 24frs.) which went out of circulation in 1795, but perhaps the napoleón d'or (of 20frs.) = 7fl. 45kr. C.M.; and four of these would be £3 2s. (The security was possibly the half-yearly or quarterly payment of Stoll's salary of £50.) When, in letter 5, he borrowed 300fl. W.W., he was asking for 120fl. C.M. (=£12). We shall not be far wrong if we call these two sums, in to-day's values, nine guineas and thirty-four guineas respectively.

(15) The *Missa solemnis* occupied Beethoven four years. When it was finished, he decided not to print at once, but to have MS. copies made and offer them to the nobility and to musical societies—and this was, practically, a sale of a limited edition. Although Schindler and others took much trouble about it, the 'miserable speculation' was a wearisome business, and brought in very little.

(16) Whether Diabelli lent the money or not, is not known. The 'work' in question was the Ninth Symphony.

No. 6. 25 Sept., 1826.

My dear Sir,

Will you be so good as to get the full score⁽¹⁷⁾ sent herewith bound in a manner fit for a king; you would do me a great kindness, and to say the truth, it must be done as soon as possible. The cost I will pay you or the bookbinder at once. You know all about binding, as I do about loosing (off jokes). I rely on your kindness, and all I will say now, is, my dear Sir,

I am your dear

Sir L. v. Beethoven.

[on the envelope]

for,

Tobias Hasslinger, Esq.

N.B.—I think my name should be erased from the first page of the Allegro, and a clean sheet of writing paper, one page, be gummed in, for the title.

(17) —of the Ninth Symphony, which he had permission to dedicate to Friedrich Wilhelm III. At the end of September Dr. Spicker presented it to the monarch, and the alteration in the binding was made a few days before: that fixes the date of the letter as about 25/9/26. The work was printed at the end of the year by Schott of Mainz, and Beethoven saw it. Three months later he was dead.

trans. A. H. F. S.

THE WOOD-WIND ENSEMBLE

AMONG the endless and delightful subtleties of the art of orchestration a matter which seems to me to have received less than appropriate attention is that of the wood-wind ensemble. Ensemble in all its aspects is, we know, but sparsely treated in most of the text-books; anything like comprehensive information regarding the blending of the wood-wind is, I believe, to be found nowhere.

It is true that, in a sense, the question is not so important as might immediately be supposed. Whilst the wood-winds number little more than ten per cent. of a modern orchestra their total colouristic effect is, of course, ever so much higher; but (apart from single chords) instances of their use all or nearly all together, whilst the rest of the orchestra is silent, are surprisingly few and brief. Those are the instances it is my purpose to investigate (not the rare complete works written for wood-wind alone). Few as they are, the faults they display are sufficiently arresting to the sensitive ear for an investigation to be worth while; and if mine is not a 'comprehensive' one it may, I hope, at least prove suggestive and stimulating.

One of the commonest superficial criticisms of the music of Sibelius is that, to a degree paralleled only by parts of the later Beethoven, it seems to be indifferent to mellifluence as such. Sibelius, one is told, makes no concessions to the ear. He often sounds sombre, severe—even harsh. Some of his more naïve champions like to use the comprehensive term 'starkness,' and profess to find in that quality a link between his music and his native scenery and climate. To be a little more scientific, Sibelius's 'starkness' may be said to comprise three technical factors. The first is his harmonic vocabulary, which generally speaking may be justly described—in relation to the volume of the works it supplies—as the simplest, the most limited, the least chromatic, ever used. The second is his slowness of progression, his repetitiveness, his reliance on the sustaining and blending of moods rather than on frequent and vivid contrasts. The third factor is his orchestral palette.

Sibelius's orchestral palette is as economical, as plain, as dependent on subtle gradations rather than bright contrasts, as the rest of his technique; and a very prominent contribution to that character is made by his methods with the wood-wind. I am not thinking here

of such things as that familiar, grinding, groove-like motif towards the beginning of '*En saga*.' In that the rasp of the minor seconds is matched by the pungent mixture of clarinet and oboe tone (the latter in its lowest register): the effect is a special one, though very typical of its composer. I have in mind rather such sober, homespun passages as the opening of the second symphony. In that and many another page Sibelius betrays a hearty indifference to mere tonal seductiveness. Whereas in his scores even the strings seem often to sound less ravishing than is their nature the plain, angular, rather crude effect of the isolated wood-wind ensemble seems the exact counterpart of much of his musical thought.

Sibelius, however, is the only composer to whom such remarks can be applied. Effects which in his music are assimilated as a matter of course are, in other men's compositions, merely crudities, clumsinesses, unfortunate lapses of care or judgment.

Indubitably the very properties which make the individual wood-wind instruments so disproportionately telling in the orchestral total make them very difficult to blend with each other. By 'to blend' I mean to produce from the mixture of two or more timbres a new timbre, which may or may not differ greatly from any of the constituent timbres but which must in itself possess homogeneousness, must be an entity and not merely an audible plurality. Or even if we admit audible pluralities of timbre, some such pluralities are pleasant to listen to whilst others are almost intolerable. It is, for example, a familiar though surprising fact that oboe and French horn tone, each in middle compass (which means that they play an octave apart), mix beautifully. I hope never, on the other hand, to hear a nastier sound than the doubling (again at the octave) of oboe and cellos that occurs in the slow movement of Haydn's symphony No. 18, in G. Such are the vagaries of tone blending; and between the various wood-wind families they are intensified. It is a formidable problem, and one which only by comparatively modern composers has been tackled at all. Single wood-wind chords are, as I implied above, fairly common. Their effect is, in anything but the slowest tempo, too short for the flaws they often contain to matter very much. Incidentally, isolated chords are the limit of whatever scanty information can be found in text-books on the subject of wood-wind balance and blend.

Everyone must know the opening allegro of Haydn's 'Military' symphony. The announcement of the main subject is assigned, it will perhaps be remembered, to a flute, with the high three-part harmony completed by two oboes. It looks on paper both simple, obvious—and dangerous. It is interesting to wonder whether Haydn realised the dubiousness of the arrangement. He wrote the simplest of three-

part harmony, the top two parts moving in thirds. On the piano, or divided among violins, such a passage is straightforward, devoid of pitfalls or subtleties (whichever way one chooses to regard them). But for those thirds to be played by a flute and an oboe, and with another oboe below, straying at times to the verge of its coarser register, is an entirely different proposition. It may be considered either a happy interplay of contrasting timbres or a ludicrous miscalculation; the great thing to realise is that it is certainly not the same as it would be if played by violins or a piano, or by three oboes (did the pitch permit) or three flutes.

A safer disposition of three wood-wind parts is to be noted in Berlioz's ' Carnaval romain ' overture, thus :—



There the neutralising of oboe with flute, against the clarinets, with the slight extra weight where it is wanted, on top, is just right. Berlioz was, of course, a connoisseur in these matters. I am not suggesting that Haydn's passage should have been scored in that way. The most obvious thing, on the contrary, for the ' Military ' symphony theme would have been three flutes. But Haydn had not three flutes. With the pitch a little lower, he might have given the tune to the oboe and the other parts to a couple of flutes, but although that would have sounded well it would quite possibly have violated Haydn's pre-conceived intentions. The only other alternative would be, keeping the flute for the melody, to use violins for the other two parts. The difficulty of amending even so simple an example as this one shows how much easier it is to find flaws than to avoid making them. That truism need not, however, really deter us from doing our little quota of fault finding.

Neither of the foregoing examples actually involves what one can call a wood-wind ensemble. In one only three instruments are employed; in the other, four. But they do excellently illustrate—in the most elementary form—the kind of problem to be studied.

Nor are the following nine bars quite an ideal example, although brass, percussion, and strings are silent in seven of them.



The point about that passage is that it exhibits in its short course three (strictly speaking four) different combinations of wood-wind instruments, viz., clarinets and bassoons; (same with flute added); flute, oboes and clarinets; oboes, clarinets and bassoons. It is put together with considerable fastidiousness and skill, and sounds for the most part excellent. Perhaps the weakest point in it is the division of the scale run between bassoons and clarinets in the last bar. The design of the ensuing section makes it quite clear that the scales (running up and down for a further eight bars) were meant to sound smoothly continuous, but actually they sound very much the reverse, the change halfway through each bar being obtrusive.

In the delightful valse movement of the same symphony occurs the following :—



Very nice indeed. Note that in the chords the instruments are 'interlocked,' that moreover the registers involved are the best for

blending purposes, that the notes are all staccato (minimising to vanishing point conflict of timbre) and that the weakest member is on top with a moving part beautifully adapted to its character.

A very different kind of use is to be noted in the 'Symphonie Pathétique.' Here the conglomerate effect is the sole objective. Again, however, the notes are staccato and the pace rapid—those are, in fact, the qualifications which make the passage a success instead of a comic failure.



For cases of exactly opposite character one may turn to the beginning of 'Tristan.' Everything here is 'Lento e languente' and slurred. For the first thirteen bars of this stupendous work (and who can say that they are not a worthy opening?) wood-wind, one horn, and cellos are the only instruments used. If one can sufficiently depolarise (as O. W. Holmes called it) one's mind in connection with so familiar a masterpiece, must one not admit that the instrumentation of that opening page is the last that would, on the face of it, be expected in such a work? But it is, of course, absolutely appropriate to the harmonies used and the mood evoked. And the entry of the full strings when it does come is, for all its unostentatiousness, overwhelming. Wagner was, perhaps, essentially a painter in daubs. His orchestral detail is often open to adverse criticism. But his conception of the broad scheme of colouring, as well as of the exactly right hue for a particular harmony or line, was unerring.

Here are the five bars of wood-wind alone from the first page of 'Tristan.' It is, of course, just their indissoluble appropriateness to the harmonic colouring that saves them. In a different context such arrangements might be calamitous.



The extreme of that principle—of justifying the instrumental colouring by the harmony and the general mood—is seen in such passages as the first and second of the following quotations. Excellently contrived as they are, they really depend on the peculiar harmonies and low pitch for their success.

Ex. 6

A Allegro Uranus - The Planets

Cello 1
Cello 2
Bassoon
Double Bass

Bassoon
Bassoon

Clarinet
Bassoon

Flute
Bassoon

The third excerpt is very interesting inasmuch as every 'family' is employed. The result obviously depends even more tremendously than usual on the technique of the players, and at best it can only sound weird (intentionally so) to such a degree that ordinary standards of blending, balance and colour have to be suspended. Obviously it is theoretically as well devised as its premises would allow. That it can ever fall pleasantly on the ear is doubtful. Elsewhere in 'The planets' are to be found passages which are frank exploitations of the largest modern resources whereby unity of colour can be secured by trebling and quadrupling the members of each family. In so far as they go beyond that principle they are very happy and successful. What perhaps the composer thought to be the logical extreme of such methods, but what seems to me only an extreme of the evil that can result when the ear is supplanted by the eye and the brain, is to be found on the penultimate page of 'Mercury.'

Ex. 7

Vivace

Flute
Flute
Flute
Flute
Flute

It is *not*, if I remember rightly, very effective in performance.

In many ways at the opposite pole to Holst is Delius. The one is all technique, the other all inspiration. In every phase of compo-

sition Delius ignores every rule there ever was. If he generally ' gets away with it ' (as I think he does) it is certainly in spite of, in the very teeth of, his almost unparalleled technical infelicity. His orchestration is no exception.

Examine the first presentation of the theme in ' Brigg Fair ' (rather too long to quote here). With the melody on the oboe no one can quarrel. In itself, played properly, it is delightful. But the accompaniment is horrible. For eight bars there are five-part harmonies for two clarinets and three bassoons—the top clarinet perilously close to the oboe, the whole effect thick. Plucked chords on the strings in alternate bars are moderately effective. But both the clarinets and the strings suddenly cease on the last beat of the ninth bar, leaving oboe and bassoons only—high and dry, as it were. The actual sound now is very nice, of course, for the notes are fewer and the tone-colour homogeneous. The re-entry of the 1st clarinet a couple of bars later is quite attractive, its effect being contrapuntal rather than harmonic.

There is a rather unhappy passage later in the work for three clarinets, bass-clarinet and bassoon.



The bass-clarinet can, of course, fade right away in the desired manner, and so perhaps can the single bassoon at the bottom. But the clarinets (in their strongest register) tend to obtrude, their tone to be ugly; and the doubling of the second voice is so unnecessary as to be quite mystifying.

If deep chords are to be used on the wood-wind at all the following exemplifies the only satisfactory type of scoring for them :—



It is rather a grunt, of course, but that is better than the most uncomfortable results which any other methods produce.

Again, Strauss provides us with a happy use of combined clarinet and oboe tones. These two incompatibles should really only be put at close quarters if extreme pungency is required, and in that case, of course, everything calls for a preponderance of oboes.



The most famous instance of the conjunction of oboe and clarinet occurs in Schubert's 'Unfinished' symphony, where the first subject of the first movement is announced by one oboe and one clarinet, in unison. Here is, of course, no question of the isolated wood-wind ensemble, but the instance is worth consideration nevertheless. I believe that it is generally held to be a successful piece of daring on Schubert's part, but I can only agree that it was successful if I can be convinced that Schubert's intention was to achieve the nondescript whine which actually results whenever the two instruments consent to blend at all. A more frequent effect seems to be that of predominant oboe tone, with a sort of simultaneous echo, very soft, of clarinet tone. In the score both are marked *pp*, and the register is such that there is no reason for the oboe to predominate if that marking is observed (whereas a fifth lower, say, it would be quite impossible to avoid the oboe obtruding). I am inclined to regard this as Schubert's one miscalculation—it could scarcely have been a carelessness, when everything else in the score is obviously so careful. For, whereas one rarely hears particular praise for Schubert as an orchestrator, I consider that the score of the 'Unfinished,' as a whole, entitles him to rank with the best of, and up to, his period. In his *Orchestration* Cecil Forsyth draws attention to the fact that the composer on whom he had, to his own surprise, to draw most frequently for examples of pioneer work in treatment of the orchestra was Beethoven. No doubt Beethoven was a great pioneer in that respect, as in some others; but pioneering is not everything—and Beethoven was increasingly deaf for most of his working life. He had not by the age of thirty-one, nor, in fact, by the age of fifty-seven, at which he died, turned out any piece of scoring to match, for limpidity, certainty, consummated originality of outlook, either the 'Unfinished' or even the No. 7, in C. And in the 'Unfinished' the wood-winds especially are delightfully used. Significantly enough they are only to be heard

in isolated ensemble in half a dozen out of its nearly seven hundred bars. Those half-dozen are too simple and slight to be worth quoting, although they are as well contrived as nearly everything else in the score. They are bars 71/2 in the first movement and 252/3 in the second; bars 71/2 are recapitulated (with interesting modifications owing to the change in pitch) by 289/290.

It seems to me natural, thinking of Schubert, to be led to think of Brahms, dissimilar though they were in many respects. And thinking of Brahms, in the matter of orchestration, is a sad business. For once again one has to despair of academic musical criticism and to grind one's teeth over the tardiness with which its bogies are laid. Goodness only knows just how such things start, but the outcome of one at any rate is that Brahms has been labelled and pigeon-holed by the critics as a poor orchestrator. That really is an absurdity only to be paralleled by the hoary and hardy idea that his musical nature was an austere and complex one. The truth is that, if only it had happened that any page in his symphonies was wedded as indissolubly to the pages on either side of it as the orchestration of any page is wedded to its matter, Brahms would have been a much greater figure than he is in the history of music, perhaps almost as great even as his own friends imagined. Of course, it could be argued, as of Wagner, that although his general orchestral design was appropriate and pleasing it failed in technical details. But that is not the usual charge against Brahms's scoring, and in any case I have never been aware of many such lapses. His treatment of the wood-wind is very characteristic both of him and of wood-wind; in other words, his natural formulae of texture and line included a good deal more that is apt for wood-wind instruments than happens with most composers. (A striking enough fact, when one remembers also that he wrote some glorious vocal lines and that he ended in possession of perhaps the most perfect pianoforte idiom, as such, the world has known.) There are not a great many patches for wood-wind alone in his scores, though three are to be found in the third movement of the symphony in D, all effective, all staccato, and all excluding the oboes. Doubtless the opening of the slow movement of the violin concerto springs to the mind, but strictly speaking it is not pertinent, for a French horn is included. Still, even with the horn, it is not a success; it has moments of unintended cacophony, seems too long, and in fact is full of the stodginess almost inseparable from such a type of scoring. Without the horn it would be a bit worse.

On the other hand the most familiar passage I shall have occasion to mention at all is one in which the warmth and simplicity of the

harmony and the congenial placing of the instruments are such that it is improbable that anyone who has never studied the score would think of it in the present connection. Or if he did, he would be almost sure to conclude that French horns were involved. I refer to the opening of the Prelude to Act IV (usually known as 'Morning') in Grieg's incidental music to 'Peer Gynt.' It is true that a horn imperceptibly supplies an extra voice for a moment half way through the third bar, but the passage starts thus:—



Openings for wood-wind alone seem comparatively popular with composers. The start of Debussy's exquisite 'Nuages' (the first of the three 'Nocturnes') is memorable for its colour and its technical certainty. Here it is, together with three other quotations from the same work:—

A musical score excerpt for three woodwind instruments: Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon. The title 'Ex. 12' and the instruction 'Modérément' are at the top. The oboe and clarinet parts are highlighted with large oval shapes around their entries. Dynamics 'ff' and 'p' are indicated above the oboe line.

A musical score excerpt for three woodwind instruments: Flute, Clarinet, and Bassoon. The title 'Ex. 13' and the instruction 'Nuages' are at the top. The flute and clarinet parts are highlighted with large oval shapes around their entries. Dynamics 'ff' and 'p' are indicated above the flute line.

A musical score excerpt for three woodwind instruments: Clarinet, Bassoon, and Trombone. The title 'Ex. 14' and the instruction 'Mollement animale' are at the top. The clarinet and bassoon parts are highlighted with large oval shapes around their entries. Dynamics 'ff' and 'p' are indicated above the clarinet line.

In Examples 13 and 14 we see Debussy utilising, with restraint, the larger resources of the modern orchestra, and utilising them more

felicitously than many of his contemporaries, not to speak of his juniors.

Ex. 15
Animo

Again dependent on a larger orchestra than Beethoven used, but exhibiting an added originality of design.

Debussy, like Brahms, has received less than his due as an orchestrator. Brahms, called bad, was sound and satisfying; Debussy, not often referred to at all, by implication *merely* 'sound and satisfying,' was actually a very fine orchestrator indeed, ranking in my opinion, for combined originality, skill, and beauty of effect, with the other two great orchestrators of this century, Stravinsky and Elgar. Debussy died in 1918, Elgar has turned seventy-six, and even Stravinsky, strange to realise, will never see fifty again. Strauss and Ravel are not really in the same class; and, for all the virtuosic intentions of some of them, none of the younger generation can yet be mentioned in the same breath. Curiously enough, it is possible that Stravinsky's own later vagaries have helped to an extent to seduce his juniors from even trying to emulate his own pristine mastery of the orchestra. His symphony for wind instruments is outside the purview of this article, but much of the opening (again an opening!) of 'Le sacre du printemps' is not. That is undoubtedly the most amazing of all wood-wind ensembles. I believe it was the first step of Stravinsky's 'bee in the bonnet' about expression in music. He said that he deliberately gave the wood-winds preference over strings for the start of 'Le sacre' because they were less expressive and therefore more suited to the stark aspects of Nature that he wished to portray. In later works he (a) avowed his divorce from literary or pictorial subjects, his devotion to pure music, (b) continued, and indeed intensified, his campaign against expression of any kind. . . . The opening

of '*Le sacre*' is, as a matter of fact, considerably expressive. So far as sheer expressiveness goes it is, I suggest, the peak of the whole work! Not that that is saying much (I am speaking, remember, merely of 'expressiveness'). There are, however, almost as many wasted notes in the first half-dozen or so pages of '*Le sacre*' as in the whole of Richard Strauss (which *is* saying much). It may be a matter of heresy to wonder whether every single note or fraction of a note in the high bassoon solo tells, has any precise significance, really counts and could not be amended or omitted; but surely even the most frantic 'fan' cannot deny the enormous futility of the tutti that before long is built up? This is, with a vengeance, a conglomerate effect that may not possibly be dissected. The only question is whether it was an effect worth getting, and whether, if so, the means employed were the only ones by which it could be got. A cynic might suggest, for example, that mere holding-notes for some dozen or so instruments, each on a different note (and with every semitone of the gamut carefully appropriated) would sound much the same. There are, by the way, a few double-bass harmonies, a few brass parts, here and there, and an enigmatic violin trill, in addition to the wood-wind.

Far, indeed, are we from the beautifully individualised use of the wood-wind in '*L'oiseau de feu*' or from the clarity, variety, and pictorial point of its use in '*Petrouchka*'. Each of those scores contains, strictly speaking, only one isolated wood-wind ensemble, and in each case the effect is a special one. The chirruping chatter of bassoons and clarinets, and then clarinets and flutes (ending in a four-part tremolo), in bars 10-12 of '*L'oiseau de feu*' is probably too familiar to need quotation; and so, I hope, is the organ-grinder's section in '*Petrouchka*' (sections 12 to 13). Any who have not seen those two scores should take the first opportunity of doing so: each of the passages I have mentioned is capable on paper of astonishing those who have only *heard* it.

I have named Elgar as the third great orchestrator of this century. Those who are familiar with his characteristic timbres or with the mere sight of his sprinkled, complicated scores, will not be surprised that it is difficult to find anywhere in his music a passage for wood-wind ensemble alone. Constant are his doublings, rooted is his distrust of unmixed hues—not to speak of the restlessness of his musical idiom—so that even the strings are rarely left unsupported for a bar or two together. But the fact, so far as the wood-wind are concerned, is that the graphic methods of a Stravinsky, the fantastic fits of a Holst, the impressionism of a Debussy, are all utterly alien to him. His tissue is more close-knit and continuous, his harmony is comparatively academic. He seems to have concluded that continuity,

close-knitness, non-pictorial methods, and a homogeneous, orthodox harmonic system, are incompatible with isolated wood-wind ensembles. And I think such a conclusion amply justified. Unfortunately it does not seem to have been reached by a good many composers, both dead and living. In earlier times the harm was minimised by the fact that the wood-wind section was small, and composers relied preponderantly on the strings for the backbone of their texture. It is only necessary to listen to one or two concerts of music composed since, say, 1820 to realise that the expanding of the wood-wind resources was not accompanied by an expansion of discretion in their use.

It is my contention, based merely on the careful use of a pair of ears not, I imagine, abnormal in any way, that compared with piano, strings, and even brass, the tone of any wood-wind instrument is bizarre and exotic in itself, not to speak of the comparative difficulties of its production and the unpredictable varieties obtained by different players and different instruments. Stringed instruments, it is true, vary in tone, and so do their players; but, of course, such divergencies are greatly neutralised by the large bodies of strings employed in an orchestra. The wood-wind are eight or a dozen soloists, and it is the most difficult thing in the world to make them sound like anything else but soloists. There is, however, one effect which can, fairly easily, be produced by eight or a dozen wood-wind instruments when their soloistic tendencies are smothered and when no other department of the orchestra is mixed with them. That effect, the last that theory would suggest but the first to which experience testifies, is what I can only call stodginess.

There is something invincibly stodgy about the wood-wind ensemble when it is used in anything but special ways for special effects. I look round for the stodgiest score I can find, and Richard Strauss provides it. His symphony in F minor must, I think, hold the record in stodginess. Here, sure enough, passages for full wood-wind alone almost abound. They are all, it should be noted, fabricated most carefully. In matters of sheer paper technique Strauss is second to none, and even in so early a work as this symphony his workmanship is very deft. The score, then, contains many passages for the isolated wood-wind ensemble which are models of orthodox skill, and which can only be paralleled for sheer unpleasantness of sound and dullness of tenor by another work from the same pen—a work outside the scope of this article but yet not entirely irrelevant—the serenade for thirteen wind instruments, op. 7.

I am convinced that many composers have been blasé about the wood-wind. Far too readily have they lost that sense of glamour which it seems to me should be provoked by the mere sound of a

flute, oboe, clarinet, or bassoon. I think, perhaps, they still find something a little out of the usual about an English horn or a bass clarinet. And so far heckelphones, bass flutes, and double bassoons have not ceased to be names to conjure with. But the four staple instruments have become, indeed, far too staple—not much more than mere bread-and-butter.

And the other characteristic failing of composers in regard to woodwind is a disregard for the technical difficulties and restrictions of those instruments. Has anyone ever heard the opening and closing chords in the 'Midsummer night's dream' overture played at the dynamic level required? Of course not. Doubtless our flautists do their best. They produce their apology for a pianissimo. The blame rests almost entirely with Mendelssohn. This is only one of hundreds of examples that could be given of composers overlooking the dynamic and tonal limitations of their wood-wind.

All other things being equal, I think that the full orchestra is far and away the most attractive musical medium at a composer's disposal. I also think that orchestration, although the youngest, has become the most highly and finely developed of the branches of technique. It should, then, be understood that, so far from this article being prompted by a wide-flung or even very deep-set pessimism, it is concerned over what I take to be only a smallish cloud—smallish but indubitably, though surprisingly, existent—in an otherwise radiant sky.

RALPH W. WOOD.

DANCE AND MUSIC

DANCING has always flourished, but ballet as a spectacle appeared suddenly, was invented, almost, in 1489 at the marriage ceremony of Duke Sforza of Milan, when an original and most extravagant entertainment was arranged. In 1581 Henry III, king of France, commanded for a wedding, festivities which included a choreographic representation of an Olympian myth. The ballet-master, Baltazarini, says in his preface to the printed work, that he had 'blended together poetry, music and dancing in a manner which, if ever done before, must have been in such remote antiquity that no trace of it remains,' and 'I have given the first place to dancing.' Here the music was as superficial as the rest, an accompaniment of moving rhythm. This form of amusement became exceedingly popular, especially in France. It was introduced into operas by Lulli and Rameau, and at this stage women were allowed to dance for the first time.

The art of mime, perhaps originating in China, had been brought to a very high standard by the Romans. A pantomime, which was a Greek tragedy without the chorus or dialogue, was produced with an actor performing gestures while a singer chanted the words. When Nero was ruling in Rome, a visiting king expressed a wish to take away a dancer to mime to his barbarian subjects, instead of an interpreter. The art was brought to France by Catherine of Medici, and was introduced into ballets, which became a series of set dances, joined by short intervals of miming, in elaborate settings, costumes, high-heeled shoes and masks.

In the eighteenth century, Mademoiselle Sallé began to use a more simple dress, while Camargo, the goddess of modern ballet lovers, wore tights and the well-known tulle skirt. In 1760 Noverre attempted to direct dancing towards the expression of feeling and narration. The movements had become set and labelled, a play with outward forms, almost ignoring emotions. Masks were abandoned eventually by Pierre Garde, and Mademoiselle Guimard wore sandals and a flowing skirt for her performances. The composers of these dances are not heard of now, but their tunes were popular and were played all over France.

The nineteenth century looked gracefully back to classical antiquity at first. Taglioni from Stockholm began the fashion for 'pointes,'

the shoes with blocked toes, which were constantly worn until Isadora Duncan danced barefooted, in this century. At last, music, the governing factor in dance, became prominent. Isadora interpreted music with her body, introducing individual reactions evoked by the music which was all-controlling. Her influence on ballet was enormous. She realised that instead of being a frame to a portrait, music should be the light falling on it, and at the right angle; so that ballet could be intensified, could become far more dramatic and personal, and need not deal always in supernatural beings and puppets.

Diaghilev, who almost perfected the dance-to-music type in Russia, said: 'Isadora a donné un choc irréparable au ballet classique de la Russe Impériale.' But he quickly experimented, and produced a successful hybrid of the 'Petrushka,' 'Daphnis and Chloe' type. In 1927 he gave a performance of Stravinski's opera 'Oedipe Roi' in a concert form, with the principal characters ranged on a raised stage, looking like statues, chanting the story, while the chorus and an interpreter commented from their places a little above the orchestra. Another experiment was made with 'Le Coq d'or' (by Rimski-Korsakov). The singers were immobile, while dancers mimed the action. This cannot properly be called ballet, but mimed opera; the music was written for an opera performance. In most of Diaghilev's later productions, he collaborated carefully with the composers, but still, as in 'Petrushka,' the music gave a general atmosphere, with a few details, e.g., the magician's flute, which could hardly have been omitted. The work, musically, consists of a collection of short scenes and dances, with no real dramatic development, and could be used for another ballet with little worry.

'Job,' by Vaughan Williams, tends to be more coherent: the broad sweep of the music is apt. But there are few opportunities for subtle miming in the plot, which is not continuous. The Jooss company produced a series of scenes ballet in the 'Green Table.' This was superbly danced and arranged, but to adapted music; the same effect might have been obtained with only an occasional drum beat or gong. The Monte Carlo company of Russian ballet have been presenting a programme of popular pieces. 'Les Sylphides,' a typical nineteenth century ballet, 'Jeux d'enfants' (pre-Petrushka), 'Beach,' modern light comedy, etc. These show a lamentable lack of progression. The choreographic effort attached to a Brahms symphony was pleasant to the eye, but the connection meant little.

The innovator at present is Kurt Weill. He dares to poach on operatic grounds. 'Anna-Anna' was a fascinating performance, with the introduction of a solo singer and a quartet, but the quartet added

nothing to the whole; it was a reminder without point. The story, as usual, was on the programme, making the singing Anna dramatically unnecessary. The music did not elaborate or intensify the action as it should have done. The atmosphere was clearly and cleverly suggested, but a mandoline or ukelele might have been as effective.

Is it enough, in a ballet, for the music to be to the dancing what the cinema orchestra was to the silent film—an agitator of emotions?

Kurt Jooss, in discussing his aims, said that he was trying to find 'a technique to express everything in dance-form. . . . to talk in a language of movement . . . with pantomimic action, with mime inseparable from the dancing, simultaneous.' That the ballet of the future would be 'a "dramatic" dance combining the elements of abstract dance, not only in the form of pantomime but in the form of the absolute dance.' Just as opera was revolutionised by Wagner, 'so I see in this new dance a new theatrical art, a dumb theatre . . . to express that which the spoken stage cannot do.' Kurt Jooss believes that the composer and choreographer should work together from the beginning, which means, from his point of view, that the exact length, in time, of music shall be produced at the moment of command. Tchaikovski used to write his ballet music to a list given him—sixteen bars of A, sixteen bars of B, etc. But in this new ballet, as in a Wagner opera, each component part should be equal to, dependent on, and inseparable from the other parts. There is no need for the music to ape the action. As Constant Lambert has said, choreography in many ways should be a counter-subject to the music; the two should not move everlasting in the same direction. It should follow when a movement needs clarifying or intensifying, and oppose when subtlety is required, when conflicting forces are to be shown.

The use of leit-motive, with considerable care, is far more necessary than in opera where the words give understanding. In 'Siegfried,' the hero talks of the dragon, and immediately the dragon's motif is heard in the orchestra. A parallel case in a ballet would make the leit-motif essential. At present few ballets (if any) introduce such a situation because the relation of music and action has not been realised.

Five arts form this modern ballet: choreography (which must include setting and scenery), dancing, miming, drama and music. Since there is miming, there must be either a 'display of emotions' which needs must change, for variety, if the ballet is lasting longer than two or three minutes, or a story, and they are difficult to distinguish. In the ballet 'Songs,' which deals with mental

agitation entirely, there is a slight story. A plot immediately gives the dancer, musician, and choreographer material for working, and scope for using their fine technique. Pavlova, in spite of being beautiful movement personified, was usually meaning something external in her dancing (*e.g.*, the swan-dance) and the plot is only a logical development from that. The important thing for a dancer to remember is that all the miming must be danced. In an account by Propert of the Diaghilev ballet company is the description of Nijinski's dancing : he was marvellous because he never ceased to dance. All his miming *was* dancing, he danced through it all, and all his movements were a joy to behold.

Music should be the words which cannot be expressed in dancing, it should make clear the motives which are not clear in the dance ; but not separately, with music as a stop-gap, but each using the other to gain a single aim. There will still be the Pavlovas and Nautch to repeat former climaxes in the development of style (and to improve), but the combination of the best work of each, with their parallel in standard of music, will be ten times more worth while. Separate string instruments produce superb music, but a trio will produce something larger, the scope of whose beauty cannot compare with the solo. So that we get the pleasure from each separate part (separated in ourselves, not on the stage) and the added one from the new art formed by their fusion. Naturally, as with instruments, we cannot say 'the more we are together, the better it will be,' and it is for experiment to find how many arts go to make the perfect ballet.

The lack of perfection in ballet at present is due to the uneven standard of the individual arts. The dance-mime and choreography are on a much higher level than the drama and music. Dull stories, often no real plot at all, and adapted music ruin ballet. 'Jeux d'enfants' had an apology of a plot, and not thrilling music; 'Green Table' had music which shamed the rest. A good ballet should maintain equal standards in all the arts, and each should be exploited to the full. From the point of view of modern ballet, all five arts should be used, and should be continuous and inseparable.

The music need not be merely a rhythmical undercurrent, unopposed to the mood of the ballet ; it can have its separate dramatic existence, with its development, but entirely dependent on the other arts (as an instrument in a trio). Dancers have ceased to need reminding of beats in a bar as obviously as they did ; Stravinski broke away from that tradition. But the music must have life and quality.

Music, in fact, has not been exploited, it has been half wasted as an accompaniment. Why a slow-moving separate, patchy music, to

a fast dramatic ballet? A physical movement expresses quicker than spoken words; so should the music enhance the expression, at the moment of heat, and push the ballet vigorously to its end; should weave with and against the dancing, precise and economical; should cease when it is superfluous; should add when it is essential; and should form a close-knit, pulsing unity with dancers and choreography. Ballet needs a composer who dances, a choreographer who composes, and a man genius enough to cut clean away all unnecessary music and complicated settings: but a musician.

PEGGY AIMER.

BERLIOZ AND THE FRENCH ROMANTICS

We cannot live on only gentler feelings, we need great and
fearful emotions to make us feel the intensity of life.

—GEORGE SAND, *Elle et Lui*.

THE Congress of Vienna rang down the curtain on the heroic exploits of Napoleon and restored the Bourbons to the throne of France. Louis XVIII drew up a Charter. The difficult problem was to know how to fit in the simmering ideals of the revolutionaries with the enthusiasm of the returning emigrants from the *ancien régime*. Was there to be a privileged class of nobles occupying public offices? Was there to be a state religion? These were the constitutional questions which absorbed the political minds of the day. But behind them there was the sentiment of the people—a point which Metternich, the arch-reactionary, completely ignored. What had happened to the urgent passions of 1789 since the despotism of Napoleon had caught them up and carried them to the Near East and to Russia? Under the reigns of Louis XVIII and of Charles X there was seemingly no outlet for those assertions of liberalism. The accession of Louis Philippe was only another compromise, and in 1848 he followed Charles X to England just after Metternich had been forced to leave Vienna.

On the ruins of the old order a new society sprang up. It was nurtured on the grandeur of the Empire and recollected the storm of the Bastille, but somehow missed the substance of them both. The main characteristic of the age was a sort of frustrated idealism. The bottled-up feelings of the people, though full of ardour, were forced into channels as imaginative and as fantastic as the preceding political events had been real and vital. The refined artifice of Versailles, obviously, had no longer any significance. Nor had its baroque sumptuousness. Certainly it meant nothing to a Frenchman who had seen the Revolution or who had been in Napoleon's retreat from Moscow.

In this new society not only was it considered quite natural that feeling should over-ride reason, but feeling itself was often pitifully controlled by imagination. From a distance of time this hardly seems an acceptable state of mind, especially as it forms part of a civilisation in which measure and moderation have been the predominant characteristics. That is why French art of the first half

of the nineteenth century occupies such an anomalous position; it appears to have no connection with what preceded it and very little with what followed it. In painting, from the graceful restraint of Watteau to the warmth and quiet of Renoir, Delacroix stands out as a giant from another land. By the side of Molière, George Sand is blustering and inarticulate. Berlioz is as far removed from the famous trinity of French composers, Rameau, Couperin and Debussy, as he is closely related to his contemporaries in the world of letters and of art.

It is difficult to imagine the vigour and the passion of the bands of students in the 1830's—'les frénétiques de la passion,' 'les possédés du sentiment,' as they called themselves. They lived in a state of constant exaltation, almost of delirium, like the heroes in the novels of Balzac. They became obsessed with 'passion' just as old Grandet became obsessed with greed or Balthazar Claës, in *La Recherche de l'Absolu*, with a mad craving for invention. Their lives were emotionally disproportional; the least incident brought forth a convulsive gesture and the commonplace was made melodramatic. But worst of all they became extravagantly rhetorical. In their reviews and letters they imagined an intensity of emotion which, of course, they could never have experienced. For, as is evident from the following letter⁽¹⁾ of a student at the Sorbonne, intensity was the main criterion:

Trois semaines mon amour, trois semaines loin de toi. . . .
Hier j'ai erré toute l'après-midi comme une bête fauve, une bête traquée. . . . Je semais autour de moi l'épouvante et la terreur. Dans la forêt j'ai hurlé, hurlé comme un démon, je me suis roulé par terre. . . . J'ai broyé sous mes dents des branches que mes mains avaient arrachées. Alors de rage, j'ai pris ma main entre mes dents; j'ai serré, serré convulsivement; le sang a jailli et j'ai craché au ciel le morceau de chair vive. . . . J'aurais voulu lui cracher mon cœur. . . .

This may seem ridiculously unrestrained and delirious, but to people in France in the eighteen thirties and forties it did not seem unrestrained and delirious at all. In fact their very self-consciousness was unconscious. It is only necessary to read in the Memoirs of Berlioz of his meeting with Harriet Smithson, the Irish actress who became his wife, to realise how far he himself could be carried away by this empty rhetoric. It is all so high-pitched; he seemed to have no sense of what we should call fitness. As a rule it is not so very important to know the life of an artist, for we are supposed to know what he is like from his work. But the life of Berlioz, comparatively

⁽¹⁾ *La Jeune France*. V. Maigron. *Le Romantisme et les Mœurs*. Paris, 1910.

uneventful as it was, and lacking certainly the sincerity and depth of Wagner or of Liszt, is so characteristic of this kind of excitement that he has been singled out as typically representing the impulse and extravaganza of his day. "My legs began to give way," he wrote on hearing of the performance of 'Iphigenia in Tauride,' "my teeth began to chatter and, my head swimming and hardly able to hold myself up, I went towards my house. 'What is the matter?' said Robert seeing me in this state, my handkerchief held up to my nose. 'Have you fallen down? Your nose is bleeding. What has happened? Speak, speak!' 'To-night they are playing . . . playing Iphi . . . Iphigenia in Tauride.' 'Ah!' And there we stood breathless and dumbfounded."

Like all the Romantics, Berlioz was inspired by the great Renaissance artists. All his life he was a devout admirer of Shakespeare and was among the first in France to recognise his genius. Doubtless he liked to imagine that he possessed some of Shakespeare's profundity. But feeling and passion were the same to him and it was all so much a matter of gesture. He cannot be measured against the stature of Shakespeare any more than Delacroix could recapture the verve and *élan* of Titian, or the Premier Empire, the majesty of Rome.

One craves, in the music of Berlioz, the meditative peace of a work like the 'Siegfried Idyll,' that self-consciousness in another sense of the word. His is music which brings no repose. His slow movements have no bloom. One would expect them to be voluptuous but they are not. Even the septet 'Tout n'est que paix' from *Les Troyens* has a certain feeling of angularity and unrest. But he is the man of wild gesticulations, of grandiose and dramatic effects as in the 'Lacrymosa' of the *Requiem*, of long declamatory passages on the trombones, of phrases wrenched out by the basses, making up their rhythm as they go along, of sparkle and glare and chords vividly juxtaposed as in the 'Marche du Supplice.' It is a frenzy which is almost hysterical.

'Music' said Théophile Gautier, the spokesman of the Romantics, 'is of all noises the most costly and the most disagreeable.' This was the current opinion in the *Cénacles*, the gatherings of writers and painters. 'Poetry and music,' Gautier goes on to say, 'are more opposed to each other than is generally supposed'—an observation anybody to-day might make on looking over the strange setting of words in the 'Damnation of Faust.' 'Victor Hugo hates opera and barrel organs most of all; Lamartine flies out of the room when a

piano is opened' (did Liszt know this?); 'and if I may speak for myself I must admit that the grinding sound of a saw and that of the fourth string of a violin create exactly the same impression.'⁽²⁾

With the performance of Victor Hugo's 'Hernani' the romantic movement won the day. It was essentially a literary movement or, at any rate, a movement where writers and painters lived in intimate association and exercised a considerable influence on each other. There is a certain aspect of the poetry of Victor Hugo—

Connaissez-vous sur la colline
Qui joint Montlignon à Saint Leu,
Une terrasse qui s'incline
Entre un bois sombre et un ciel bleu?

—which is the imagery not of a poet, but of a painter; and one of the characteristics of the huge compositions of Delacroix is that they contain an element proper to literature—the descriptive 'story' element. Lesueur, Berlioz, Monpou, Liszt and even Chopin had much to gain by introducing pictorial and literary values in their art. But to see the significance of these last influences it is as well to glance over the social history of music in France in the preceding thirty or forty years.

Up till the time of the Restoration the musician belonged to the theatre or to the Church and lived in a sphere of his own. His social relations with the outside world had little effect on his music, and he did not attract much attention from the *intelligenzia*. Music, in short, was regarded as an ornamental adjunct of social life, but not a very necessary, nor a very expressive one. French opera, worn out by the eternal struggle against the Italian school—the last phase was between the Gluckists and the Piccinists—was at a low ebb. It tended to become more and more ingrown, more stylised and derivative of other music until, with Gossec, Halévy and Auber, spontaneity and inspiration were bygone things.

The music, however, that was required for the big commemorative festivals of the Republic, or for the celebration of victorious battles, had to be strikingly suggestive. There was to be no doubt as to what it represented. It had to portray in a rather obvious and realistic manner the events connected with the occasion. To ensure that the effects were not lost, Lesueur, who was commissioned to write a number of these 'Odes,' had descriptive programmes of the music printed and distributed before the performance. They were generally works on a large scale and employing a very large number of executants. In the *Mercure de France* it was said of Lesueur's 'Ode

(2) Théophile Gautier, *Grotesques*.

*en faveur du rétablissement de la paix,' performed in 1799 to celebrate the eighth anniversary of the Republic, that he 'used one more orchestra than citizen Méhul on the 15th of Messidor. Each of his four orchestras,' it said, 'had a character of its own. One seemed to depict the joyful feelings of some of the people returning home from the celebration; another, by the use of a similar but rather more animated chant, gave further expression to these light-hearted feelings; the third, with an entirely different theme, definitely expressed the exaltation felt in a great reunion of men with a common aim.' We are not told what the fourth orchestra 'painted.' Lesueur's indispensable programme had been mislaid on this occasion, and the audience had to resort to its imagination, a faculty in which it was certainly not lacking. In his *Exposé d'une musique, une, imitative et particulière*, Lesueur makes it clear that the aim of composers should be to get 'le plus de poésie, de peinture et d'expression dans leurs ouvrages.' People were no longer in the mood for enjoying the abstract qualities of melody, as Bellini conceived it, or the detached symmetry of the sonata form. What they required was vivid representation. The object of music, said Lesueur, is imitation. Poetry and painting, he maintained, were not only the domain of writers and painters; in his art, the musician could embrace them all.*

Lesueur received his musical education in the church and it was intended that he should be a religious composer. But in later years his constant preoccupation with 'descriptive,' 'expressive' and 'pictorial' ideas points to the fact that, like his pupil Berlioz, he was really destined for the theatre. Not only did he write many works for the stage—he was the favourite operatic composer of Napoleon I—but even his church music is definitely theatrical in character. On his appointment to Notre Dame he effected a veritable revolution by augmenting the orchestra of the cathedral to a hundred and in performing oratorios during the service. The service was a kind of opera, '*l'opéra des queux*' as it was called; and Lesueur brought abuse on himself from the concert and opera organisations, for, as they said, he was competing with them.

Berlioz started his career as a composer of operas; and there is little doubt that if his first opera, '*Les Francs-Juges*', had been accepted he would have remained an operatic composer. As it was he turned to the concert hall and there introduced the descriptive programme music which he had learnt from Lesueur. It was really nothing less than dramatic music transferred to the concert hall. The detailed programme of the '*Fantastique*' is sufficiently well known; in its pendant, '*Lélio*', Berlioz provides for a drop curtain, an invisible

singer and a speaker (mostly to rant about the beauty of Shakespeare and the adventures of brigands in Italy); the last movement of 'Roméo et Juliette' is not a symphonic movement at all but the finale of an opera; and as for the 'Damnation de Faust,' Berlioz himself described it as an 'opéra de concert.'

This use of an operatic style in the concert hall may seem a clumsy compromise, but it will be remembered that the concert, as a social institution was as yet in a very embryonic state. It was only just beginning to take on the familiar forms of the symphonic concert and the virtuoso recital and there was room for another kind, the theatrical concert of Berlioz, or 'Concert dramatique' as he called it. What is important is that Berlioz, although he composed few works for the stage, was essentially a dramatic composer. It is not merely that he was the founder of French Romantic opera; he brought a dramatic technique into symphonic music.

At a glance there appear to be many strangely contrasted aspects of the style of Berlioz. So far as melody is concerned, there are themes like the airs of Spontini with a wire run through them (the ball movement of the 'Fantastique'). There are those which drive on and on and seem to generate energy of themselves like the air of Aeneas in *Les Troyens*. 'Ah! Quand viendra l'instant des suprêmes adieux'; and then those which are shabby and meander over stagnant basses such as the viola theme in the first movement of 'Harold en Italie.' Almost always when he wishes to secure some pictorially dramatic point his music is poignant and effective; and when he falls back on the conventional sonata development, the Beethovenian process of repeating a part of the theme, as is the case in the first movement of the 'Fantastique,' he sounds dull and pointless. His best music is built up purely as a dramatic episode, the harmony and melodic line following the dramatic interest point by point. The 'Invocation à la Nature' and the 'Course à l'Abîme' from the 'Damnation' are both examples of this, and it is interesting to compare the latter with Wagner's 'Walkürenritt.' The one is a dramatic episode, the other is a symphonic interlude.

Berlioz was a master of drama in music and as such he widened the social appeal and significance of his art in France, as Beethoven had done, by other means, in Germany. But whereas Beethoven was a thinker and a musical philosopher, Berlioz was an actor. All his drama and grandiloquent phrases, his long silences and sighs, belong to the art of gesture. It was a passionate gesture, rhetorical maybe, but certainly vigorous.

EDWARD LOCKSPEISER.

RACHMANINOV'S SONGS

It is possible to classify songs roughly in two categories, according as they are the work of compression or of expansion. Though compression often implies shortness, this need not be so, for there are examples of lengthy songs such as Loewe's 'Edward,' where the concentration never relaxes one instant; and though expansion invites length, here again the style of the writing is the dominating factor and marks the difference between Schumann's improvising fancy and Schubert's stronger sense of form. If compression scores, as it does, on the artistic side, expansion attracts the enterprising mind. Furthermore, it is often only by expansion that emotional temperaments can flourish. Too much discipline is bad for them; once they 'get going' they cannot stop to qualify or revise. So long as music concerns itself with the emotions of the individual, it must accept much that does not completely satisfy it as an art; it must suffer that life may gain.

It suffers through being the work of a divided mind. It is often vague and diffuse, as George Sand said of Liszt's compositions, and the net result is a dispersion of the effect, so that while we admire piecemeal, our final impression is often one of irritated dissatisfaction. The concentration which composers study to maintain in instrumental pieces, they often relax in the writing of songs, as if the problem were easier to resolve and all that was wanted were a musical illustration of the poem. Thus, many songs are written, but few are felt to be genuine creations from start to finish. In Rachmaninov's case, it is clear that song to him has been primarily an emotional outlet for his temperament. Like Tschaikovsky, whom he strongly resembles, he felt a personal sympathy with the pessimistic mood of the poems he has selected, and he has passionately sought to express this sympathy in his music. In much of his pianoforte music there is a reserve, an aloofness, which the artist instinctly adopts when he is complete master of his medium, as composers like Chopin, Rachmaninov, and Medtner, are masters of the pianoforte medium. But where the sympathy with the voice is incomplete, as it is with many instrumental composers, then if they write songs, they make up the deficiency by emotionalism or by a very elaborate pianoforte accompaniment. Rachmaninov does both and runs the risk of alienating both the

listener, whose emotions do not happen to run on the same lines, and the singer, who naturally expects to have as much to do with the performance as the pianist who accompanies him. It is not surprising therefore that where the emotional excitement subsides, the song as an integral and satisfying thing emerges. It is in those short, dreamy or meditative romances, which recall many of Schumann's, that Rachmaninov seems most successful—'How fair this Spot,' 'The Heart's Secret,' 'The Lilacs,' 'Night is Mournful'—songs veiled in a moodiness which never becomes quite articulate and soon sinks back into the silence from which it has come.

If a certain sense of vagueness is incurred, even with the best of these songs, this may be explained through an ignorance of Russian and a reliance on translation. Except where Rosa Newmarch's hand has intervened, the English translations can hardly be described as more than barely adequate. They are too abstract in expression to arouse much interest or leave any definite idea behind them. But one cannot avoid the conjecture that this fault is originally not that of the translations, but of the Russian poets themselves, who seem to have only one theme, the sadness of life, which they celebrate in too abstract and indeterminate a manner. This serious drawback is matched in the music by a preponderance of elegiac melody which unless contrasted with short figures of rhythmical vitality soon becomes heavy and cloying. Melody of this type which takes us back to Bellini and Donizetti and was adopted by Chopin, has become quite a recognised feature of instrumental music. Chopin was too rhythmical a composer to use it very much outside the nocturnes and even there he took care to relieve it with ornamentation, just as the singer was expected to do. Rachmaninov, who is less compromising, makes abundant use of it in most of his earlier works, the C minor Pianoforte Concerto (op. 18) affording perhaps the most striking example. The fault of that fine work lies in the lack of contrast and touch of sickliness which too much elegiac melody involves. In songs it is bound to weaken any definite character the words possess, and make one song very like another. These 'long sequacious notes,' with their excess of conjunct movement and suggestion of an endless unfolding, are now so strongly associated with the violoncello and the pianoforte that words are no longer considered appropriate to them. From the spell of such a monotonous *espressivo* Verdi with his characteristic melody rescued Italian opera. We are reminded of this achievement when examining Rachmaninov's 'Melody' (op. 21, No. 9), a song in which the words seem lifeless and unimportant whilst the notes might as well be vocalised or, better still, played on

the violoncello. For all that is wanted is an expressive rendering; the thought of the poet becomes an intrusion on a beautiful piece of music which can easily exist without it. So with many of the songs from opus 21 and opus 26. What characterisation there is the pianoforte part provides, as in the striking accompaniment to 'The Fountains' (op. 26, No. 11). The voice has to wait for the obvious climax on the high note, and there are too many of these high notes in Rachmaninov's songs as if he resorted to them as Liszt resorted to cadenzas in his pianoforte music, through a weakness or uncertainty of handling.

In spite then of beautiful music and striking *crescendo* passages, the singer's confidence is never entirely gained. Mozart and Handel knew very well that the singer must believe in the words he is singing. The genius of Handel is shown in his extraordinary power to give even commonplace words the force of an oracular utterance. Thrilling as they are as accumulations of tone, Rachmaninov's climaxes do not carry the words with them and give each syllable of them an added incisiveness. The music triumphs fatally. The words drop out or fade away. Wagner is partly responsible for this unfortunate development. The words of the 'Prize Song' for example, may be susceptible of a strictly rational interpretation, but it is extremely doubtful if the tenors who sing them have a clear idea of what they mean. They surrender themselves to the music, it is to be feared, and sacrifice their intelligence. If the words don't mean more to the singer after he has sung them, then why sing them at all? No good song is pure *bel canto*. Mendelssohn's 'On Wings of Song' is more than a beautiful melody looking for a Liszt or a Wilhelmj to arrange it for the pianoforte or violin. By luck or by inspiration it holds the words so successfully in its grasp that we can hardly imagine another setting of them. Who could recite 'The Erl King' or 'Archibald Douglas' after hearing Schubert's and Loewe's music? If music could not set its stamp on words in this miraculous way there would be no justification for singing at all. It is before this test that the bulk of Rachmaninov's songs fails. Beautiful and stirring as much of the music is, the total effect is not one of inevitability. A new creation has not come into the world.

Soon after the songs of opus 26, Rachmaninov's 'pathetic period,' as Bekker would call it, comes to an end. The pianoforte preludes of opus 92 compared with those of opus 23 show a marked difference of style. The music is more characteristic and the pieces more strongly differentiated through the displacement of melodies by rhythmical figures which lend themselves to concise and rigorous

treatment. The songs of opus 34 compared with those of opus 26 are also more characteristic, the subjects of the poems more varied and definite, the voice part more declamatory. But what most distinguish these songs from those that preceded them are the highly realistic and difficult accompaniments. As the whisper of the wind, the surge of the sea, the voice of the nightingale and the lover's rapture are evoked from the pianoforte the singer's status becomes more and more precarious until in the last song of the set, the powerful and disturbing 'Dissonance' and Rachmaninov's 'Liebestod' music, the pianoforte emulates the opulent Wagnerian orchestra and the voice can only exist in a struggling manner waiting for the high notes. Similarly in 'What wealth of rapture' (opus 34, No. 12), in order to compete with an accompaniment of rapidly repeated fortissimo chords on a dominant pedal octave the voice is subjected to this ungrateful treatment :—



Several of these songs and others such as 'Fate' from opus 21, which is dedicated to Chaliapine, are definitely of a virtuoso character and depend on that combination of voice and personality which is so rare. Single examples meeting with the right singer would no doubt make a strong impression. But for one who looks at these songs in their ensemble, their importance turns on the old question how far emotionalism is to be allowed a free hand in music. Strongly contrasted with the songs of the Tschaikovsky-Rachmaninov school are those of Sokolov written forty and fifty years ago, and mostly to French words. Here are the simplicity and economy so signally lacking in the other and better known composers. Here is no dispersion of the effect, for every note is necessary and in its place; the mind sees clear and the result is true. Each song within its limits is good, known to be so or it would not be there. But such songs, like the lieder of Franz, are a little too self-consciously artistic to be deeply moving and those whose primitive instincts like to see Nature breaking tyrannously through the crust of convention will prefer Rachmaninov with all his sins crowding thick upon him. For sincere emotion acts as a welcome and liberating influence on our own emotional life. As the face is transformed by strong feeling and acquires a new and sometimes terrible interest so is it with art, until a point is reached where the romantic merges into the grotesque and pleasure is turned to pain.

No hard and fast rules can be laid down in a matter which is so largely one of race and tradition. Our English tradition represents an experience which has learnt to distrust extremes, avoid expostulation, and take a middle path neither rising high in hope nor sinking deep in despair. So far as we are controlled by that tradition it is unlikely that we shall have enough sympathy with Rachmaninov's temperament to admire unreservedly that particular manifestation of it which is to be found in his songs.

ERIK BREWERTON.

VERDI'S ITALIAN CONTEMPORARIES & SUCCESSORS

IT is a striking fact that during the greater part of his career Verdi appears to have been the only operatic genius in Italy. His three great predecessors disappeared one after the other; Rossini ceased writing when Verdi was a mere boy, Bellini died five years later, whilst Donizetti went insane shortly after the production of 'Ernani,' Verdi's first opera of undoubted talent.

Since then Verdi's sway was undisputed. For a brief moment, in 1868, Boito ventured to challenge it with his strange fantastic opera 'Mefistofele,' but he was discouraged by its reception and abandoned the struggle. Apart from this, the only Italian opera not written by Verdi that attained world-wide celebrity between 1840 and 1890 (the year of 'Cavalleria Rusticana') was Ponchielli's 'La Gioconda.'

It is difficult nowadays to take this work seriously, or to understand its phenomenal success. It seems not only coarse and at moments even ludicrous, but it is also completely lacking in originality. Undeniably it owes much of its success to the melodramatic—but extremely effective—libretto of Boito, far and away the greatest Italian librettist of his time. Besides, it is not without a certain rude vigour, and a rather charming ballet forms a really delightful interlude. In Italy 'La Gioconda' won for itself a position not dissimilar to that occupied by Gounod's 'Faust' in France. For more than half a century it has been the inevitable stand-by in moments of financial stress.

In spite of desperate efforts, Ponchielli never repeated his success, but rapidly sank into mediocrity and insignificance. At first Verdi had regarded him as one of the most gifted composers of the age; he now summarily dismisses him with the words: 'His work is lacking in individuality and is written in a superannuated style.' And poor Ponchielli—the master of Puccini and Mascagni—had fondly fancied that he was years in advance of his age.

After 'Aida' Verdi regarded his operatic career as finished. For no less than seventeen years he was silent, and whenever he spoke of the theatre, it was with the utmost distaste and bitterness. During this period, the influence of Wagner began at last to spread in Italy; in 1875 'Lohengrin' was performed for the first time at Bologna and has remained the only Wagnerian opera the Italians genuinely

love. Wagner's influence was felt not only in Boito's works, but also, though in a lesser degree, in those of that strange, unfortunate genius, Alfredo Catalani, whose first important opera ' Dejanire ' appeared in 1883.

No less an authority than Toscanini himself has proclaimed Catalani one of the greatest of Italian composers, yet though his memory is still cherished in Italy and one at least of his works frequently performed, his name is little more than a name elsewhere. If we read the journals of the time we perceive that he had many bitter enemies, who belittled his work on every possible and impossible occasion, and a few enthusiastic admirers, such as Toscanini and Puccini, who praised him unstintingly. The general public, however, regarded him with a lukewarm interest bordering on apathy. Two words are constantly applied to his music: ' aristocratic ' and ' melancholy,' and these are not precisely the qualities likely to endear him to an Italian operatic audience.

Above all, he was considered dangerously Wagnerian in his tendencies. We know that Verdi, otherwise a generous and broad-minded man, was savagely jealous of him and used his powerful influence to dissuade the publisher Ricordi from producing his young rival's works at the Scala. Years later, when Catalani died young, disheartened, worn out with work, his health ruined by an insidious disease, Verdi exclaimed: ' Poor, poor Catalani! Excellent man! Splendid musician! What a pity! What a scandal! What a reproach for all the others! ' He was thinking of the ceaseless intrigues that had done so much to embitter the dead man's life, of the ignoble jealousy that was revealed even at his funeral and—who knows?—perhaps of his own lack of understanding and sympathy.

Verdi's antagonism to Catalani was partly understandable. He feared Catalani was seeking to destroy the traditional character of Italian opera. ' Another step—and we shall be completely Germanised,' he exclaimed. He accused Catalani of imitating Wagner and of making the symphonic element preponderate unduly in his work. A cursory glance at Catalani's last and most important opera ' La Wally ' (1892) reveals this tendency fairly clearly. It is, in spite of occasional absurdities, for which the librettist is mainly responsible, a real music-drama with elaborate preludes and intermezzi constructed with exquisite art. Catalani was not so limited in his outlook as most Italian operatic composers of his period, who reveal themselves as singularly clumsy and uninspiring when composing expressly for the orchestra. We have only to compare the intermezzi of Catalani with those of Puccini in works such as ' Manon

'Lescaut' and 'Madame Butterfly' to notice the difference between true inspiration and pretentious bombast. Puccini seems lost when his music does not directly interpret the action on the stage, he becomes heavy and meretricious and loses all his originality and slightly sentimental charm. On the other hand, Catalani writes a dramatic scene effectively, but a little intermezzo divinely well. No Italian composer of his century has a more exquisite taste, a keener sensibility or a more subtle sense of atmosphere. For instance, with what effortless ease and veracity does he conjure up a winter landscape in that wonderfully ardent and sombre prelude to the last act of 'La Wally' that Toscanini has rightly proclaimed one of the greatest things in Italian music.

Undeniably Catalani was a genius, and a sadly underrated one too. On the other hand, he seems to have been singularly lacking in literary sense; he continually blundered in his choice of libretti. He had begun by collaborating with Boito, with whom he had much in common and who wrote the libretto of his one-act opera, 'La Falce.' After the *succès d'estime* of this work, Boito seems to have lost interest in Catalani and devoted himself entirely to the service of Verdi. Catalani's next important work 'Dejanire' was ruined by an incredibly naïve and incoherent libretto, a kind of hotchpotch of 'Aida,' 'Gioconda' and Meyerbeer's 'Africana.' Nevertheless, the intensity and extraordinary vigour of much of the music compelled respect, whilst the last act, in particular, contains probably the most dramatic and terrible scene Catalani ever wrote.

After 'Dejanire' wild romantic themes of Germanic origin occupied the young composer's attention. First came the 'Loreley,' a subject which had already tempted Mendelssohn and which seems to have literally obsessed Catalani. Only Wagner could have made a success of this wildly improbable and essentially undramatic legend, and he would have been too wise to attempt it. It seems, however, to have been Catalani's favourite werk; even on his death-bed he spoke continuously of it and implored Toscanini to make several slight alterations in the score.

There is a widespread belief in Italy that the relative lack of success of this opera did much to hasten Catalani's death. Unfortunately it had appeared in the same year as Mascagni's 'Cavalleria' and was rather overshadowed by this crude and vigorous melodrama. Indeed, Catalani's dreamy, melancholy work was too unlike any other Italian opera to be appreciated immediately. However, its simple pathos and intense spirituality did much to make its incredible story acceptable. The delightful dance of the 'Ondine' is probably the most popular thing Catalani ever wrote, though it lacks the distinction

and originality of his best work. On the whole, 'Loreley' (after the sinister grandeur of one or two scenes of 'Dejanire') shows a distinct decline in power.

A profound discouragement seems to have overcome Catalini about this time. 'Think,' he writes to a friend, 'I have been working twelve years and my profession gives me neither spiritually nor materially what I require. Even if you write a masterpiece, you run the risk of its never being heard. Ah, there is so much bitterness in my soul and I am terrified at the thought of my future. What a comedy this world is and how weary I am of it!'

No doubt there was much cause for bitterness. Morbidly sensitive, Catalani felt that he was cruelly underrated by most of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, he had the consolation of knowing that some of the finest intellects in Italy appreciated him at his true value. Toscanini saw in him the founder of a new school, the most highly gifted of the young composers of his time, and fought with untiring energy to obtain recognition for the friend of whom he had said: 'He never had any joy in life, he who had so longed for it.'

It has been asserted that Catalani, in spite of himself, was influenced by the sensational successes of Mascagni and Leoncavallo when he chose his last libretto, a pseudo-romantic story of Tyrolean peasant life, based on a very popular German novel called *Die Geier Wally* by Wilhelmine von Hillern. It is the kind of story that might have attracted almost any of the Veristic composers that were springing up like mushrooms in the Italy of the 'nineties. It teems with sensational incidents and has all the ingredients of the typical melodrama of the time: jealous lovers, bloody revenge, hairbreadth escapes, suicides, etc. However, whatever its faults, this libretto was the best Catalani ever received, and in spite of his efforts to keep abreast of the times, the composer never for one moment sacrificed his dignity or his artistic conscience. One is, indeed, inclined to marvel that with so essentially repulsive a theme, such a fundamentally fine and noble work could have been produced.

Apart from Verdi's later masterpieces, I know of no Italian opera of the last hundred years that can stand beside Catalani's 'La Wally.' It may not be an essentially dramatic work; the story may not always be gripped in the music, but it, nevertheless, possesses a delicacy, an imaginative vigour, an inexhaustible fund of melody that surprise and enchant one at every turn. To mention only one instance, how much poetry, how much spiritual exaltation is there in such an entrancing song as Wally's poignant farewell to her home ('Ebbene? Andrò lontana'). What a strangely soaring quality this lovely music

possesses and how entirely it lacks the cloying sweetness and the hysterical over-emphasis that ruin so many of the best airs of Puccini and Mascagni.

But the chief interest of '*La Wally*' perhaps centres in its dramatic interludes. I know of no operatic composer, with the exception of Bizet, who can write a short intermezzo with such exquisite perfection as Catalani. There is a heavenly simplicity of invention in the delicate little intermezzo before the third act; it has a sort of shy, poignant charm that is strangely moving. It seems, indeed, of too intimate a nature for the purpose of entr'acte music and curiously out of place in an Italian opera-house.

No less remarkable is the prelude to the last act. It is full of resigned sorrow, of melancholy foreboding. If the song of *Wally* was a farewell to home, this prelude is surely a farewell to life. The spirit of death seems to hover over it. It has, indeed, an austere grandeur and passionate intensity that render it singularly impressive.

'*La Wally*' was undeniably a success and exercised a very strong influence on the young Italian composers of the time. Above all, Puccini endeavoured to imitate Catalani, and the last act of his '*Manon Lescaut*' (the lonely death of the lovers in the prairies) is very obviously modelled on the last act of '*La Wally*'. Years later, when Catalani's opera was produced for the first time in Madrid, the critics accused him of plagiarising from Puccini, though his work happened to have been written more than a year previous to that of his more fortunate contemporary.

Catalani was encouraged by his success to write another opera. This time he chose a Tolstoyan theme and entitled his new work '*In the Forest*'. Some critics have declared that he had at last found a subject and a libretto worthy of his genius. What he would have made of it we can only guess, for his premature death, at the age of thirty-nine, occurred only a few months after the completion of '*La Wally*'. There can be no doubt that his early decease was the worst disaster Italian music had suffered since the death of Bellini, and the feeling of grief must have been intensified by the knowledge that the dead composer had never had the opportunity of expressing himself fully and freely.

Verdi wrote his last opera '*Falstaff*' in the same year in which Catalani died. That year, 1893, was the end of an epoch, and one can scarcely refrain from thinking that from this moment Italian opera began to degenerate. The phalanx of young composers that sprang up during the last decade of Verdi's life, left the old maestro indifferent. A certain sympathy he seems to have felt for Puccini, a mixture of impatience and admiration for Mascagni, but neither of

them awakened in him such strong emotions as Catalani. He seems, however, to have regarded them *faute de mieux* as his successors.

Puccini is certainly the most popular operatic composer of the twentieth century; nevertheless, in Italy there are several eminent critics who rate Mascagni as high, if not higher. We also know that Hanslick, the famous Viennese critic, despised Puccini, but regarded Mascagni as a daring and original composer and exclaimed after hearing '*L'Amico Fritz*' : 'Es steckt Rasse in dieser Musik.' At any rate, Mascagni is a prophet who is honoured in his own country. It does one good to see how an Italian audience enthusiastically rises to its feet when he ascends the podium. His operas are also performed more frequently than those of any living composer. Nevertheless, we read in our musical dictionaries that only one short work of his has met with success! This is no less preposterous than to assert that merely one of Sullivan's comic operas, '*The Mikado*', has been successful, this being practically the only one that is ever performed abroad.

It may be of interest to state that three at least of Mascagni's operas belong to the permanent repertory of every important Italian opera-house (namely : '*Cavalleria Rusticana*', '*L'Amico Fritz*' and '*Iris*'), whilst three others ('*Ratcliff*', '*Isabeau*' and '*Il Piccolo Marat*') are very frequently performed. This does not compare so unfavourably with the four great hits of Puccini and the five or six of Verdi.

Mascagni's popularity is not undeserved. He is not a mere sensation-monger, though he has often been condemned as such. His '*Cavalleria*' is not representative of his best work. Neither perhaps is '*Iris*', the perennial popularity of which has always surprised me. This opera is at moments unmistakably tedious. We must, however, remember that Mascagni was the first composer to deal seriously, and even reverently, with a Japanese theme and that a well-known singer has declared that she greatly prefers '*Iris*' to '*Madame Butterfly*', because it is so 'exquisitely poetic and consistently Japanese.' There is also some charmingly quaint music in it; *Iris'* song '*Vive scintille*' is, in particular, curiously haunting. The work owes its popularity mainly to the celebrated '*Hymn to the Sun*', of which Italian audiences never seem to grow tired and which is blatantly effective, but not particularly original or inspiring.

'*L'Amico Fritz*' is Mascagni's favourite opera. He has never forgotten or forgiven the adverse criticism that greeted it on its first appearance a year after '*Cavalleria*'. Nowadays, however, it is extremely popular and Italian audiences simply wallow in it. Yet it is not one of its author's really important or significative works. The

libretto is puerile, the music pleasing and vivacious, with occasional touches of genius. Suzel's enchanting romance of hopeless longing, 'Son pochi fiór,' is one of the most exquisitely poetic of Italian love songs, words and music being perfectly wedded. On the other hand, the intermezzo is somewhat monotonous, though it is brutally effective and absolutely lacking in the saccharine sweetness of its more famous predecessor (which, by the way, it is rapidly replacing in popular favour).

Mascagni's two finest and most ambitious works are undeniably 'Guglielmo Ratcliff' and 'Il Piccolo Marat.' The former is, however, almost ruined by an unnatural and inhuman ending, whilst the latter suffers no less from a far-fetched happy one. One thing Mascagni never learnt from Verdi: to store up his energy and inspiration for the last act. What is the use of writing a fine work if your inspiration deserts you at the decisive moment? This calamity never happened to Verdi; he would frequently sink fairly low during the course of an opera, but in the last act he would invariably take the theatre by storm. Mascagni's inability to do this is probably the chief reason for his relative lack of success.

'Ratcliff' (which appeared five years after 'Cavalleria') is a musical version of Heine's tragedy and shares with Verdi's 'Macbeth' the distinction of being the gloomiest opera of the Italian stage. It has often been asserted that the subject does not lend itself to operatic treatment, but it has, nevertheless, attracted composers of all nationalities, including the Russian Cui and the Swiss Volkmar Andreae. There are certain dramas that, somehow, seem incomplete without music; Maeterlinck's 'Pelléas and Mélesande' is one; Heine's youthful tragedy 'Ratcliff' is another. This vague, shadowy work dealing with a man's futile struggle against relentless fate seems to cry aloud for music—and Mascagni has provided it with a stern melancholy accompaniment that grips the imagination. In the whole range of Italian opera there are few things more poignant than Ratcliff's impassioned tale of his unhappy love or his gloomy monologue, when he is contemplating suicide. Moreover, the dreamy intermezzo with its haunting motif is the finest piece of instrumental music that Mascagni has ever written and makes the ubiquitous intermezzo of 'Cavalleria' seem very cheap in comparison. This was duly acknowledged by the Italian critics and no less a judge than Puccini exclaimed: 'A fine work! He has really made progress!' Anyone who has heard the work will wholeheartedly agree, and wonder at Streatfeild's statement that after 'Cavalleria' Mascagni's 'shallow vein of invention was quickly exhausted.'

With regard to Mascagni's last opera, 'Il Piccolo Marat' (which

deals with the revolutionary excesses after the murder of Marat), there are divergencies of opinion in Italy itself. It has been denounced as sensational; it has also been compared to an Aztec temple, huge and shapeless. On the other hand, the lengthy love duet in the second act has been acclaimed the best thing of its kind since Verdi's death and it is certainly remarkably vigorous, spontaneous and effective. Somehow this music is so much more youthful and fresh than that of 'Cavalleria' written more than thirty years previously. And yet Mascagni seems to have composed much of his opera in a slightly hysterical mood. 'I have created this work with clenched fists,' he exclaims. 'Do not look for culture or melody. There is nothing but blood!' This may account for the rather unnecessary violence bordering on frenzy that characterises certain parts of his work. However, he has caught more than once that wild spirit of mingled savagery and idealism that is typical of the French Revolution. And last, but not least, how beautiful is the lengthy orchestral epilogue that, instead of the usual few hasty bars, concludes the work in such a noble and inspiring fashion! I have, indeed, often thought this epilogue a more brilliant idea than the intermezzo in 'Cavalleria.'

As for the libretto by Forzano, it is extraordinarily good. It is perhaps the best Italian libretto in existence, apart from the two libretti Boito wrote for Verdi. It is a little masterpiece of constructive art; the interest never flags for a single instant, and the dramatist proceeds from effect to effect with unfailing skill. Every episode is significative and dramatic, and though the happy ending is rather unsatisfactory and slightly ludicrous, the composer, after a moment's hesitation, springs into the breach and saves the situation with a dexterity that even such a master of theatrical effect as the creator of 'La Bohème' might have envied.

Passing on to Puccini, I find it difficult to form an opinion. He lacks the variety and unexpectedness of Mascagni. He is at times exasperatingly repetitious. He is less unrestrained emotionally than Mascagni, but he is also infinitely more sentimental. On the other hand, his instinct for what is effective on the stage is unerring. One cannot imagine his accepting the libretto of 'L'Amico Fritz.' He spent almost more time choosing his libretti than writing his music—and he seldom made a mistake. There is not much spiritual power in his work, and even his best operas are extraordinarily unequal. One has only to compare the first and second acts of 'La Bohème' to see him at his best and at his worst. He can be very charming and sometimes really moving (witness nearly the whole third act of 'Manon' and the short duet of Mimi and Marcel in the third act of

'Bohème'), but, on the whole, he is emotionally rather shallow. Yet he does not deserve all the contempt that has been poured upon him, and there is a growing appreciation of his skill and sincerity. We must also remember that in 'Gianni Schicchi' he has written a perfect little masterpiece, the best one-act opera of the century, a work of amazing verve and wit.

It is strange how Leoncavallo, one of the most cultured of Italian musicians and who once seemed a fairly important figure, is practically forgotten nowadays, even in his own country. Only one opera of his, 'Pagliacci,' still holds the stage. His 'Bohème' has a rather delightful and original libretto and contains a few charming scenes, but it has been unable to compete with Puccini's more popular work. His reputation has been steadily sinking and all his pretentious historical operas have passed into oblivion. Yet he is—apart from Boito—the only prominent Italian composer who was at the same time an extremely competent librettist. The book of 'Pagliacci' will always remain a classical example of how to write an effective libretto. The tragedy of Leoncavallo was that he was a first-rate librettist, but a second-rate musician.

I have not mentioned the more modernist operatic composers of Italy; it is as yet too early to form an opinion of their merit. The great figure of Verdi towers above them all; even the most gifted of his successors seem pygmies beside him. There is, indeed, little likelihood that our age will produce a work of the grandeur and dignity of 'Otello' or of the subtlety and vivacity of 'Falstaff.' Nevertheless, in the works of Verdi's successors, there is still much to delight and even impress us—and Italy is rightly proud of the theatrical acumen of Puccini, the vigour and sincerity of Mascagni and the spiritual insight of Catalani.

J. W. KLEIN.

BEETHOVEN'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

BEETHOVEN'S Violin Concerto, the 'King of Concertos,' the *ne plus ultra* of fiddling ambition, occupies a place of such transcendent glory in the musical firmament that its eminence is seldom disputed. It has become customary to accept it as the unparalleled model of concerto construction, the keystone of the violin repertory. This deep, ingrown conception of the sole violin concerto to come from Beethoven's pen is surprising only when one sends a glance in retrospect and notes with what extreme indifference early efforts to promulgate the work were received.

In his youth Beethoven had been rather partial to the violin, and for a time had taken lessons on the instrument. But in spite of an earnest desire to attain proficiency, he never succeeded in any great measure, and there was an element of bitter tragedy about his eager enthusiasm, for a great part of what others took for ineptitude was unquestionably due to Beethoven's defective hearing, which naturally made accurate playing an impossibility.

Between 1790 and 1800 Beethoven seems to have been taken with a veritable mania for stringed instruments. Numerous chamber music compositions made their appearance during that period, and one abortive sketch of a violin concerto in C Major is also recorded. Why this concerto was never developed is not very clear. The unfinished manuscript is still to be seen in the Viennese Library of the Friends of Music.

In the early 1800's a Viennese violinist named Franz Clement took Beethoven's fancy, and it was Clement's style and ability as an executant the master had in mind when he composed the Concerto in D major. Clement has in the course of time slipped into what is almost musical oblivion, and indeed, were it not for the memory of that December afternoon in 1806, when he faced the apathetic audience at the old Vienna Opera House and played the unfamiliar pages of his friend's concerto, it is likely that he long since would have been completely forgotten. Yet it appears from the reports of his day that the man was more or less of a genius, and quite worthy of Beethoven's confidence. His talents were multiple and varied, and included composing, conducting, piano playing, and a prodigious musical memory. His attributes as a violinist were suavity, lightness, brilliance, and a per-

fection of intonation that was astonishing, especially in the upper register.

Two anecdotes are told in relation to Clement's association with the Beethoven concerto. According to one of them, the composition was not completed until the very day of the first performance, and Clement found himself in consequence obliged to play the last movement at sight without any previous acquaintance with it. Beethoven's scribbled manuscript makes the story extremely improbable—unless Clement managed to combine clairvoyance with his reputed dexterity. The other anecdote attributes the lilting theme of the rondo to Clement instead of to Beethoven. Although conceivably true, it is a detail of little importance, for no one would think of denying that Beethoven certainly used the theme to better advantage than Clement could or would have done.

What, then, was the reception given the premier audition of the new concerto? The *Wiener Theaterzeitung* had this to report:—

The excellent violinist Clement played, among other remarkable pieces, a violin concerto by Beethoven [sic] which, due to its originality and some very beautiful passages, earned exceptional applause. It was the art of Clement especially that was acclaimed for its charm, force, and surety of intonation. As for the concerto of Beethoven, the judgment of the critics is unanimous; certain beauty is conceded, but they find that the construction is weak, and that unending repetition of certain uninteresting places might easily cause fatigue.

The *Allgemeine mus. Zeitung* of January, 1807, says simply:—

Admirers of Beethoven will learn with pleasure that he has composed a violin concerto, which the favorite Viennese violinist Clement executed with his habitual elegance and clarity.

The 'remarkable pieces' mentioned by the *Theaterzeitung* were buffers the wary Clement placed on the programme to moderate the tedium he felt sure the concerto would occasion. One was an overture by Méhul, and the other was one of Clement's own compositions, a set of variations which he executed *with the violin held upside down*, to the pronounced delectation of the audience. Flanked by such dubious compereers the Beethoven concerto made its bow!

There seems to be no record of a second performance by Clement, and it is extremely doubtful whether Beethoven ever heard his concerto played again in public. Long years went by before others took up the composition. To explain such neglect it would be necessary to go into an involved discussion of the nature and construction of contemporary pieces in the same form, of the budding of concert hall heroes vowed to their own selfish cult. Suffice it to say that the concerto of Beethoven's day was fast bound by the gilded chains of

the virtuoso's egotism, and his attempt to change the mode into something more serious was too sudden and revolutionary. The concerto form was to remain in such unfortunate bondage until Schumann and Brahms, following in the tradition of the master, finally liberated it.

Someone has called the Concerto in D a 'Tenth Symphony with violin obbligato.' The suggestion is not in the least temerarious, for in orchestral substance, in melodic line, in development, the work is worthy to stand side by side with any of the symphonies. The entire structure is essentially symphonic. The orchestra holds the solo part within such solid bonds that the violin is incapable of asserting through the heavy phalanx that its rôle is preponderately important. This subserviency of the solo instrument is clearly defined in the opening allegro, where the complete statement of themes is allotted to the orchestral introduction, while the violin only interjects itself at last to develop with arabesques what has already been stated. Compare it to the anaemic accompaniment of a concerto of—Jarnowick, for instance! Somewhat the same procedure is followed in the larghetto. Only in the rondo is the soloist given some measure of sway over the accompaniment, and even then not uninterruptedly.

After Clement's introduction of Beethoven's concerto, the next memorable audition was not given until 1828, when the distinguished artist Baillot played it in Paris on the occasion of a Beethoven gala by the then infant *Société des Concerts du Conservatoire* under Habeneck. As at the initial performance by Clement, critics gave more acclaim to the playing of the soloist than to the new concerto, although one critic, Fétis, did describe the work as 'one of the most beautiful musical conceptions one could imagine. The piece,' he added, 'admirable in both plan and thought, was a continuous enchantment for the listener. Charming phrases, unexpected modulations, piquant orchestral effects—all are found in this work.'

The aforementioned concert took place on March 23. The success was so gratifying that Baillot was invited to repeat the concerto on the sixth concert of the same season—on May 11. Then followed twenty years of unexplained neglect by the *Société*.

Meanwhile there were attempts in other cities. At the London *première*, in 1832, a critic's opinion was—'a fiddling affair, that a composer of the third or fourth class could have written.' In Vienna, Henri Vieuxtemps, aged fourteen, played in magnetic style the work Clement had never found occasion to play there a second time. In London, in 1844, another wonder-boy, the thirteen-year old Joseph Joachim, tackled the noble majesty of Beethoven's neglected pages

with an enthusiasm that was not to abate until the entire music world had approved that enthusiasm. Joachim imposed many of his own ideas as to bowing and fingering, and in addition wrote three sets of cadenzas for the work that are classic adaptations of Beethoven's style. And to Joachim more than to any other violinist belongs the credit of revealing all the depth and beauty of this concerto to a world that was inordinately cold to its first advances. There have been notable subsequent interpreters—Flesch, Kreisler, Busch, Ysaye—but it was Joachim who pointed the way, and over each new performance of those exalted pages his beneficent spirit still hovers.

LAWRENCE SOMMERS.

BIOGRAPHY IN MUSICOLOGY

IT is sometimes considered incumbent upon the musicologist to store in his memory, or at all events to place handy for reference, an accumulation of historical fact (and even assumption) which is not directly concerned in the technical or æsthetical development of music as an art. A knowledge of musical history, that is to say, is understood to imply familiarity not only with such evidences of change and progress as are implicit in the succession of actual musical works, but also with the circumstances which were concerned in their production.

It is, however, possible to exaggerate the importance of biographical details as aids to musical research; not because the two factors are unconnected—it is obvious, indeed, that they must be inextricably allied—but because the psychological issues involved are too subtle and complicated to permit the precise relationship to be defined.

In no sense is it my intention to minimise the value of biographical research, even when it is conducted, consciously or unconsciously, with a view to proving that some cherished god stands on feet of clay. We cannot know too much, as a matter of general interest, concerning great men whose achievements have engaged our attention; nor, in this age of candour, need we be unduly affronted by the revelation of their indiscretions. The relation of the facts concerning Wagner's behaviour to his mistresses, or the unsavoury explanation of Beethoven's ultimate deafness, adds something, however unpleasant it may be, to our knowledge. Whether it adds anything to our understanding is extremely questionable; for enlightenment on matters of personal circumstance, or even character, does little to elucidate the mysteries of artistic creation.

Such premises are far too insecure to form bases of any reliable deductions; nor are the interactions of circumstance upon character sufficiently definable to yield a theory of any practical value. The history of the ' Siegfried Idyll ' will serve to introduce my contentions. On the face of it, the circumstances of its conception and their ostensible effect upon Wagner would seem to be highly illuminative. The birth of the young Siegfried opened in the creative artist a vein of lyrical tenderness that had hitherto remained sealed. So much appears to be reasonable assumption. But are we to deduce from it

that no other circumstance in life or imaginative experience could have produced this particular result, or that only lack of a parallel concomitance of events prevented a similar manifestation from other composers; and, if not, what is the significance of the incident, except as an item of human interest? If definite assistance to musicology is to be secured, one must discover *why* Wagner should be so affected—a suggestion which opens up a realm of enquiry and conjecture before which the brain reels—and even then the results could be applicable only to Wagner.

If, however, the bare statement of an historical occurrence in connection with its musical results is of importance in musicology, there remain many problems to be solved. I speak from an insecure knowledge, but I believe that it is philosophically unsound even to argue that any specific effect arises directly from the ostensible cause or causes, but for the purpose of argument we may assume that the customary procedure is legitimate. The difficulties remaining in the way are bound up with (1) the fluctuating standards of music criticism, (2) the variations in the nature of creative imagination, and (3), relativity—the last-named, of course, in its general meaning and not in its application to particular scientific theories.

If it be admitted, as it surely must, that the critical attitude towards a composer is liable to undergo change and modification during the passage of time, it is at once evident that the musicologists who lean upon biographical detail are likely sooner or later to be embarrassed. Nothing seems more patent than that Beethoven's deafness must have exercised some effect upon his latest works. A critic of the same period, finding the music beyond his comprehension, would not unjustifiably proclaim it incoherent—we must not deny him this justification as long as we claim the right to voice similar opinions, after due reflection, concerning some of our own contemporaries—and probably attribute the chaos to the composer's disability; the writer of to-day, seeking for a tangible reason for the depths of solitude in this music, might well account them to the same cause. To argue that both critics were historically accurate, and that only the aesthetic valuation has changed, is beside the point. The crux is that one writer seeks to fasten badness, the other greatness, upon one and the same circumstance. It remains, therefore, a matter of doubt whether the historian of to-day should attribute to Beethoven's deafness (or at all events admit its influence upon) the glories or the infirmities of the composer's third period, as he conceives them; if, indeed, he is justified in drawing any conclusion in the absence of a complete key to Beethoven's individual mentality. That there are, in fact, concrete reasons for the personal qualities of

a composer's work is naturally not denied; but they cannot be discovered as long as there is doubt concerning the specific nature of the effect.

Even if a system of absolute criticism could be established, however, difficulties would remain. If it were possible to say with exactitude whether a particular work of Mozart were 'eternal sunshine' or whether it possessed an underlying vein of melancholy and cynicism, we should be in no better case. We are helpless until we have precise and conclusive evidence concerning the nature of each composer's creative imagination. Some artists have the capacity for transforming their feelings directly into tangible shapes; many have not. The actual crises in an artist's life naturally affect his work; but they will affect it at relatively different times and in vastly different ways. Music of deep and poignant feeling does not necessarily arise from personal emotion of the composer, or even from the sum total of his experience. Some men may be profoundly moved by agencies which are purely external, and which have only an indirect bearing upon their own emotional adventures—a book, a poem, a picture, a symphony—and be stimulated by them into original artistic creation. Others may derive stimulus from their own experiences, but only in retrospect—in tranquil periods when joys and sorrows are no longer overwhelming. Indeed, the range of possibilities is vast, and the actual process of artistic creation is but vaguely understood, even by those whose gift it is.

On the face of it, it may sometimes appear possible to see a connection between a man's character and his artistic creations; but in such cases we need no evidence beyond the works themselves. One has only to study music to deduce that Beethoven was a man of strong character, that Mendelssohn was fastidious to the point of shallowness, and that Berlioz was a person of unbalanced imagination. Nevertheless, such rough and ready assumption is dangerous, and not merely because it is based on current critical appraisements; for it is difficult to determine exactly how far the capacity for propounding musical ideas is dependent upon technical facility and experience. A Beethoven may in a few phrases say more than a Berlioz will convey in an entire work; but not necessarily because the Beethoven's conception is vaster, his character more worthy, or his understanding more potent: it may be that it is in his power, as it is not in the power of the Berlioz, to unify the conception directly with his technique, to condense it into a small and pregnant compass.

These difficulties are bound up with the most confusing element of all—relativity. There is nothing in life that is not relative. There

is but one adjective in our language that is not relative in its application, the word 'absolute,' on the interpretation of which there can never be any definite agreement! Every symbol in a musical score is relative; our critical standards are relative. Artistic inspiration is relative.

If we allow that a composer is 'inspired' by external circumstance it does not follow that we shall infallibly discover the reason for a given inspiration, even though our historical data be complete; for the root of the matter lies not in any inherent quality in the influencing circumstance, but in the nature of the individual reaction to it. Without the authority and the imagination to project himself entirely into the composer's mentality, the musicologist is helpless. It is not in the power of A to say how such and such an occurrence affected B at a particular moment. Even if some general basis, such as an understanding of the character, predilections, and habits of B, were established, A must still discover the particular mood, and even the state of health, of B at the time of the occurrence. Abnormalities may arise from many causes. In poor health, for instance, many men can be seriously disturbed by small annoyances which, normally, they would treat as irrelevant. Any reaction, again, is modified by others; an emotional shock must necessarily affect the response to succeeding taxes upon the feelings, but in what degree, or precisely in what way, it is impossible to determine. The most vital consideration of all this is that what under any circumstances may be trivial or meaningless to A may be of primary moment to B; and, naturally, a man may be more powerfully stimulated by some petty domestic occurrence which is entirely insignificant (and possibly unknown) except to himself than by happenings of cosmic import.

A composer with a developed creative technique will express a particular mood forcibly and well, no matter what may be the cause of that mood, or whether it be positive, retrospective, or imaginative. It is impossible to define such moods adequately; the cross-currents of personality are too obscure to be followed by an outside enquirer, however careful or penetrative his mind. Every man locks in his heart secrets which are beyond the comprehension of others, and he is susceptible to influences which no other is permitted to suspect. We may propound general psychological principles to account for phases of human conduct; but in the last analysis they must be adapted to, not applied to, individual cases.

Between such matters as these and music criticism *per se*, moreover, a great gulf is fixed. It may be legitimate to say, after reference to generally accepted standards, that a musical work is joyous,

sorrowful, nostalgic, or to describe it by any other convenient term. But criticism goes too far when it tries to define the exact nature of the emotion, to say, for instance, that the exuberance of a certain piece of music is that of one who has walked five miles in spring sunshine rather than that of one who has been fortunate in love. It exceeds all reasonable bounds when, after constructing some such shaky diagnosis, it attempts to trace the affection to its sources.

It is not without misgiving, therefore, that one observes the tendency to amass biographical information with a view to explaining the qualities of a composer's work, and to disclosing the various circumstances which prompted him to produce it.

J. H. ELLIOT.

MUSIC AND MUSICIANS IN THE U.S.S.R.

THE U.S.S.R. of to-day is an object of intelligible, though not always healthy, curiosity. Great interest is taken in that strange and mysterious country, so unlike any other, and of late it has also attracted the attention of the European musical world. The war and the subsequent revolution hid the Russia of the past from western eyes, and since then the interchange of musical material between Russia and the West has almost entirely ceased. The exports from Russia, and even from the U.S.S.R., consist solely of *émigrés*, and the West sees a slow but systematic influx of musicians who have forsaken their native land. As a body they are no longer young; they are men of mature age, who are weary of the struggle for existence and yearn for the comforts of life to which they have been accustomed. Very many, of course, have remained behind, and of them the West knows little. The Bolsheviks, so renowned for their seeming dexterity in extolling their own achievements, have next to nothing to say about their exploits in the field of music. Of the compositions produced in present-day Russia only a few have managed to break through the blank wall and make themselves heard throughout the West—young Mosolov's symphonic tableau 'The Factory' is an instance. At one time there was some talk of Shostakovich, and several of Myaskovsky's symphonies have been performed. The latter, again, is getting on in years, and on the whole may be considered a son of the previous régime. The return to the Soviet bosom of the celebrated Sergei Prokofiev, already crowned with laurels, made a great stir, but the reunion was purely platonic; actually and physically he continues to lead a happy existence in Paris.

Nevertheless there is much to be said concerning the musical life of the U.S.S.R. which the Western European musician might hear with advantage. I might add that I do not refer to its negative aspect only, of which a great deal has been written and not always with justification. On the contrary, I believe that, bearing in mind the present unhappy condition of the musical art throughout the world, a condition of which everyone is aware, the situation in the U.S.S.R. is probably more fortunate than in Europe.

The Soviet government is usually censured for its autocratic rule and its entire suppression of any adverse opinions. It is reproached

with the fact that it wants to make art merely an instrument of propaganda.. These reproaches are the more just in that the government itself does not deny their justice. The history of the world teaches us that when the power is in the hands of men of profound and categorical convictions, firmly held, that power is never inclined to tolerance. This has been the case in all the great periods of religious exaltation. A strong conviction cannot abide other ways of thinking. Communism resembles a religious creed in many respects, and shares with it a fanatical belief that it, and it alone, is right. Hence the possession of all these characteristics is not surprising. May it not be said that a tolerant liberalism, which permits the existence of every kind of opinion and belief, is the result of an absence of any belief, of any firm conviction? Is it not the outcome of a profound scepticism?

Yes, the whole of life in the U.S.S.R. is dominated by the Communist creed, exactly as the life of the European nations at the beginning of our era was dominated by the Catholic creed, whose servants no less cleverly exterminated their opponents. But it is precisely in music that the negative qualities of this exclusiveness find less outlet. Music, as we know, is an art without an object or an idea, and whereas it is difficult for the literary man or the artist to refrain from expressing his political convictions, for the musician it is a far easier matter. On the other hand it is much more difficult to display in music the political symbol of a creed. Pure music, we may as well say at once, is simply incapable of it.

I have before me a number of letters from friends dealing with music in the U.S.S.R., and a batch of Soviet journals devoted to the art. The latter provide clear evidence that the musical life there is a flowing and spreading stream, which at times becomes a foaming torrent. The issue of musical journals by the State, or as official organs, has no precedent in Europe, and of itself says much to the European reader, accustomed to have such journals published by wealthy patrons of music who hold fixed and definite opinions, or by others for advertising purposes. It is true that in the Soviet publications there is much that arouses suspicion : excessive space is allotted to propaganda by music; too great importance is attached to the ideology which, by some miracle, has made its appearance in the musical tissue. Musical thought, criticism, is in the hands of new people, hitherto unknown, brought forward by the new social circles. They are young, and their heads are full of notions which perhaps have not settled down quite as we should have liked, nor on lines with which we are familiar. Their ideas ferment like new wine, their

opinions are too categorical, their appreciations too impulsive. The reappraisement of previous values is occasionally too hasty, and the various political labels affixed to musical compositions at times appear to have little justification. Nevertheless it is the life of musical thought as lived in a new social setting.

The most astonishing feature of this extraordinary musical world—a feature which a glance will reveal—is its vitality, its animation. It is quite evident that music is necessary, even very necessary, to these people; that they long for it, insist on having it, and commission it; that there are enormous cadres of men who live by music, both ideologically and physically. In comparison with such an atmosphere the European air seems nauseous and mephitic. The European musician is accustomed to spend his whole life in endeavouring to persuade people that his art is needed; accustomed to the feeling of indifference to music, whether to its creation or its performance. The sense of the uselessness of music and the musician which has oppressed him in recent years is unknown in the U.S.S.R. There the numerous concert rooms and opera houses are filled to overflowing. Besides these there are innumerable club platforms and the vast, inexhaustible Russian provinces, all demanding music. Apart from the professional musicians, all of whom are busy, there is a huge and ever-growing army of amateurs. Factory workers organise musical circles, whose activities range, according to circumstances, from balalaika or accordion bands to symphony orchestras. If we look at the musical life of the capitals we shall find that it includes symphony orchestras; permanent instrumental quartets maintained by the State (a phenomenon unknown in Europe); musico-scientific institutes, in which the science of music is cultivated (also unknown in Europe); and schools of music, whose teaching is based on modern methods. In comparison the European system seems stereotyped and out of date, to say nothing of the unpleasant commercialism permeating it—a feature which is absent in the U.S.S.R.

The essence of the whole business consists in the fact that the Russian musicians, in the main talented and sensitive people and usually idealists by nature, contrived to join the good ship "Communism" in the nick of time, and have managed to get the control of music more or less into their own hands. Music in contemporary Russia is directed by musicians, and this means a very great deal. In the Communist era they have been able to bring into actual being, to incarnate, a number of their cherished ideas, often of an advanced, progressive nature—for example, their views on teaching and science, including the conception of a musical science treated

systematically. In the contemporary Russian conservatoires the progressive ideas of Russian musical workers of the past have been practically applied. And the Communist Government have willingly met them half-way and have not put obstacles in the path of modern thought, nor upheld the traditions and routine of bygone times. Furthermore the Russian musicians were generally democratic, and the Government's call for the musical enlightenment of the masses found a ready response; indeed the musicians were, perhaps, keener than the Government itself. The Russian people as a whole are exceptionally musical and really love music. The results of this enlightening process are plainly evident. Now, after fifteen years, new strata of the population have been drawn into the musical life. The composition of the concert audience has changed; it no longer consists of the fashionable folk. It is the workers and the Government employees to whom the tickets are now distributed by the official organisations in charge of the concert business; and this state of affairs, again, seems strange to the European, habituated as he is to the impresario and his methods.

In the teaching establishments the routinism, previously so noticeable, has disappeared. The younger element which used to wage war on routine has been called in, and has gained the ascendancy. The professional staff in general has been rejuvenated. Youth has entrenched itself in the science institutes, new to Russia, and in the creative sphere it has got closer to the real business. The situation of the composer in the U.S.S.R. is the more favourable in that his work, provided that the level attained is at all tolerable, always has a chance of being published. For this purpose there is a State Publishing Department, managed, again, not by dealers, but by musicians. The selection of works for publication is made by a jury, which includes all the most prominent composers in the U.S.S.R., progressive in their outlook and alive to the contemporary tendencies in music. It is true that the printing of music in the U.S.S.R. is accompanied by difficulties, but they are due to the paper crisis, with which the musical world has nothing to do.

Lastly to all this must be added the fact that in the U.S.S.R. the musician is, generally speaking, a privileged person, a man who is wanted and protected; the Government looks after him, as he is necessary to it. Hence, though living conditions are on the whole extremely trying and below the standard which would be acceptable to the European, the circumstances of the musician are comparatively satisfactory, more comfortable, nearer to the pre-war ideal which every Russian has in mind. Morally he occupies a highly exalted position,

in contradistinction to his European brother. I have by me several letters from composers: all of them speak of numerous commissions for operas, propagandist music, operettas, songs for workers' clubs, and music for the cinema, and all lament that they have to refuse orders. The musician thereby enters the aristocracy of Soviet life; he is a man of means, able to indulge in a style of living beyond the reach of the ordinary citizen.

In regard to this, however, we must not deceive ourselves. That which for the middle-class European is the dismal, gloomy post-war level—the possession of a two-roomed flat, and a certain sufficiency (the possibility of coffee and white rolls every day)—is, of course, for the Russian a luxurious form of existence, which the elect alone, the representatives of the Government, can permit themselves, and then only in the capitals. During the last fifteen years the standard of living has been enormously reduced, and it is amazing that this prolonged and depressing state of affairs has had no effect whatever on the spirit of the musicians, on their devotion to the business of their art. I remember the days when the civil war was raging, when white bread and fuel for heating one's flat were unprocurable luxuries; when, instead of bouquets, bundles of firewood and bags of flour (less beautiful but more useful) were presented to the ladies of the ballet at the theatre. And in spite of the bitter cold of the Moscow winter, the musicians, wearing gloves and fur coats while they played, assembled in the icy concert halls, and the crowded audiences, hungry and frozen, listened to them intently. In view of this great love of music it is not surprising that now, when conditions are apparently somewhat easier, the artistic flame does not grow dim but, on the contrary, burns more brightly, encouraged by the sympathy of the government and the masses. Artistically the musician lives a fuller life in the U.S.S.R. than in Europe, where he is obliged to commercialise himself. The people of the U.S.S.R., too, are more responsive, more enthusiastically inclined towards art—a fact which is supported by the unanimous testimony of European musicians (Prokofiev, Borowsky, Medtner, Szigeti, Milhaud, Honegger, Klemperer, Bruno Walter, Coates) who have visited Russia since the revolution.

It must not, however, be inferred from all this that the Russian market is open to the European musician. I do not think that it is. That which abundantly satisfies a man inured to many years of privation would seem the sorriest poverty to the middle-class European. It does not surprise me that a correspondent after informing me that he earns thousands and has to decline innumerable commissions, asks

me to send him ten dollars. It must be remembered that the average income of a 'wealthy' Russian musician, expressed in European currency at the rate of exchange and having regard to the purchasing power of that currency, is not more than from seven to nine dollars a month. If this is the level attained by the most favoured section of the community, what is to be said of those who are not so fortunate? I doubt if the European musician, even if unemployed, would be tempted. Furthermore we have the conditions peculiar to life in the U.S.S.R., thanks to which the requirement of the most elementary necessities involves an enormous expenditure of time and energy. The pre-eminence of the musician in the U.S.S.R. is, therefore, of a purely moral and spiritual order.

In this article my task has been merely to describe the atmosphere surrounding musical life in the U.S.S.R., and I do not propose to discuss in detail the creative work now being produced there. Its general lines are, of course, prescribed by the dominant Communist religion; harmony with the ideas of Communism is required of the musician; every important work is invariably written with a purpose, or has a propagandist hue. Anything discordant, any deviation from the orthodox, is severely handled, both by the critics (who are quite ferocious and for some reason are always threatening punishment by the police—a state of things generally incomprehensible to the European), and, in more serious cases, by the Government. The musician in the U.S.S.R. is, however, usually very submissive to the authorities and does his best to obey; his political blunders are mostly due, not to reluctance, but to ignorance and to failure to understand the ideology required of him. A few representatives of the race of 'pure' musicians still survive; they write symphonies and quartets (to which no ideology can be applied) and as a rule are under suspicion; they are not loved and are considered to be the spawn of the old *régime*. Consequently they are now trying to put in an appearance on the common front by writing a workers' hymn or a propagandist ballet. In general it must be said that the atmosphere is comparatively more favourable to the scientific worker, the teacher, and the performer; the creator comes off second-best. It is really difficult to expect from the U.S.S.R. creative work of the highest order just now; periods of fanatical religious intoxication, whatever the underlying idea, are usually sterile for an art restricted to such narrow limits, especially when the artist himself is not at all enchanted with that idea.

L. SARANEEV.

Trans. by S. W. PRING.

MUSIC FOR SHAKESPEARE

THE musician is seldom satisfied with the music used in the performance of Shakespeare's plays.

Such grumbling is often justifiable. A small orchestra, gathered together with little or no regard for ensemble and balance, playing selections from present-day musical comedies or overtures to nineteenth century comic operas, is indeed insupportable to the sensitive ear. Still, one ought not to go to the other extreme and overload the play with an elaborate musical setting, whether it be by Mendelssohn or Sibelius, yesterday's idol or to-day's. The play is the thing, not the accessory.

The question is a difficult one; for music there must be, even if we dispense with preludes and interludes. We have the authority of the Folio for sennets, flourishes, drums, alarums, retreats, and 'still music.' And the interspersed lyrics are by no means mere additions, but serve a dramatic purpose. All Feste's songs in *Twelfth Night*, for instance, are not only part of his character. They are also used at times to clear the stage, the absence in the Elizabethan theatre of a drop curtain rendering final tableaux impossible.

It is encouraging, therefore, to come across a producer who has not forgotten this. Such a one is Harley Granville-Barker, though, unhappily, he has given up active work in the theatre. Both in the prefaces written for *The Players' Shakespeare*⁽¹⁾ and in their collected and largely rewritten form as *Prefaces to Shakespeare*,⁽²⁾ not only does he analyse the structure and characters of the plays, the staging and the casting, but devotes some words to the necessary music.

Mr. Granville-Barker's aim is to produce Shakespeare as nearly as possible under the stage conditions for which he wrote, but not with so strict a fidelity as to hinder spontaneity of appeal. And thus he wishes the music to be played by a 'consort of viols,' plus, on occasion, one of recorders, with trumpets and drums wherever the Folio directs. 'I assume,' he says in the general introduction to *The Players' Shakespeare*, '(and tacitly, but for this remark) that no one would neglect to use Elizabethan music with the plays, and to use it just as Shakespeare did. The point does not seem to me to be arguable.' I myself would add a proviso that a reasonable standard

(1) Ernest Benn, Ltd.

(2) 1st and 2nd Series: Sidgwick & Jackson, Ltd.

of excellence of execution be attained. Enthusiasm for these old instruments must not get the better of our critical ear.

When he produced *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Savoy Theatre in January, 1914, he called in Cecil Sharp to compose and arrange a suitable score. This was published with a preface wherein Sharp justified his choice of folk-song, and it is a pity that in the reissue by the Oxford University Press this is omitted. In 1924 Mr. Granville-Barker himself discussed Sharp's views in a preface to *The Players' Shakespeare* edition of the play. (This has not yet been collected and revised.) Thus we have the points of view of both the musician and the producer.

Cecil Sharp postulates that one has three alternatives in arranging music for Shakespeare. First, he says, one can adapt Elizabethan music originally set to other words; secondly, one can compose music in the Elizabethan idiom; and, thirdly, there is original composition.

The first he rejected on the ground that words and music being, in the Elizabethan age, so closely related and allied, any adaptation of such music to other words could only result in inartistic wrenching of the symmetry of one or the other. Moreover, he added: 'To us Elizabethan music always sounds strange, unfamiliar, archaic—and, to some extent, precious.'

The second he did not care for because it was a sham. And he thought it far better to commission a composer to write an original score.

But when he had to set about the problem himself, he resorted to folk-song.

Considering Mendelssohn's music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, he saw that not only could it be condemned because it might be inapposite to the spirit of Shakespeare's comedy, but also because it was of a bygone fashion. He therefore looked around for some music that was just as much not for an age but for all time, as the text was. And he chose folk-song because he held it to be 'the only music' which fulfilled his requirement that the music for Shakespeare should possess 'the same characteristics of permanence and endurance as the drama itself, music which is impervious to the passage of time and will satisfy equally the artistic ideals of every age.' Folk-song, he maintained, 'is undated, it belongs to no period; it is a growth, not a composition.'

Luckily he did not fall into the error of supposing that because Bach and Beethoven were great composers they would necessarily make a just alliance with a great dramatist. I well remember a certain production of *Hamlet*, in the entr'actes of which movements from

either a Brandenburg concerto or one of Bach's overtures were performed. It spoilt the whole tragedy for me, so inapt was the selection. Collaboration between a great composer and a great dramatist may be desired; but it is not to be obtained by merely placing the work of two great men together.

Yet the use of folk-song is not a satisfactory solution. It is true that Shakespeare may have known some of the tunes Sharp uses—*Greensleeves*, for one, is mentioned in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*—but this in itself is not sufficient cause for their use. The bare way in which Sharp treated them is too matter of fact beside the play's verse, and this defect is also accentuated, to my mind, by the use of folk-dance. Folk-song, for this purpose, must be treated in an imaginative and individual manner.

When Sharp came to set ' You spotted snakes ' and ' Roses, their sharp spines being gone ' (which Mr. Granville-Barker took from *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, to take the place of the fairy song which he believes is missing from the last scene), he resorted to composing in the folk-song idiom, and one may well ask wherein this differs from composing in the Elizabethan idiom. May it not be condemned for the same reason as Sharp condemned his second alternative?

In the matter of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Mr. Granville-Barker agreed to the use of folk-song; but he does not consider it can be applied to other of Shakespeare's plays. Nor does he care for original composition, because he feels that a modern musician may do just as much harm in the way of over-embellishment as painters, lime-lighters, and costumiers. And to a certain extent this is true. Mendelssohn's score, to name no other, is as alien to Shakespeare as are the Restoration versions of Dryden, Davenant, Shadwell and Purcell. Moreover, not only does he take liberties with the text (repeating words in the manner of opera composers), but he does not even allow for the words to be heard.

Yet, as Mr. Granville-Barker insists over and over again, the appeal of Shakespeare ' is as directly to the ear as is the appeal of a song or a symphony. . . . The verse has the virtues of chamber music.⁽³⁾ We may suppose that at its best the mere speaking of the plays was a very brilliant thing, comparable to *bel canto*. . . . The emotional appeal of our modern music was in it, and it could be tested by ears trained to the rich and delicate fretwork of the music of that day.'⁽⁴⁾ Thus, if we tire the ear with a surfeit of music, we are not in a position to appreciate Shakespeare's art to the full.

(3) Preface to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

(4) Introduction to *Prefaces to Shakespeare: 1st Series*.

So Mr. Granville-Barker favours the use of Elizabethan music. He concedes that it may sound archaic and too unfamiliar, but suggests there is a case for compromise, even if it leads to the 'wisely rejected' course of composing in the Elizabethan idiom.

I should myself have thought [he says] (though necessarily in such a matter I speak under correction) that here, precisely, was an opportunity for leading an audience back, and all unconsciously, into that medium of sound, of emotion even, in which the play was first meant to make its effect. It is just because Elizabethan music is somewhat unfamiliar to the ear that I advocate it. It will not surely strike the uninstructed hearer so strangely as to provoke argument or raise questions; and the instructed hearer can probably take the appropriate sort of pleasure in it. Music affects most of us without our well knowing why. Moreover there is no art that can so readily, by suggestion, and even by its very unfamiliarity, transport us over time and space, though the destination be barely known. Bagpipes suggest Scotland, a guitar Italy, a tomtom the jungle. A minuet will set us imagining eighteenth-century surroundings. We may lack the knowledge to place Byrd and Dowland in theirs, but the surroundings in this case are supplied by the play. We have only to surrender to the sounds.

Music, truly, is of its time; and there is innate in it something of the spirit and behaviour of its time, which could never perhaps find equal expression in words. Words are for thoughts, and emotion must be framed in terms of thought before words will convey it. But music may express something, now as simple as set movements of the body, now as subtle as those moods of the mind and the measures to which emotion learns to beat. By reasoning about it we may make it more strange than it ever need be if we simply listen. For the emotional self is apter at shifting ground than the intellectual, apter to explore unknown ground.⁽⁵⁾ I am sure at least that you can sing and dance a man back into the seventeenth century far more easily than you can argue him there. And I cannot think that any approach to listening with Shakespeare's ears is other than a gain. One of the ways to a love of his verse may well be through the music that he loved.⁽⁶⁾

Much can be said for this point of view, and I have seen Shakespearean productions wherein the use of fantasias by Byrd and Gibbons has proved most satisfying.

But, in general, I would do away entirely with music before the rising of the curtain. It is unnecessary; for Shakespeare's poetry soon creates its own atmosphere, and no audiences seem to care about listening to music in the entr'actes. For the songs I would search for a simple setting apposite to the spirit of the play, which allowed

(5) 'And if there is such a thing as racial memory, music, one would say, could be counted on to call it to life.'

(6) Preface to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

the words to be clearly enunciated, and which avoided the bathos of balladry and the idle repetitions that Dr. Arne too often used. For those occasions, as at the opening of *Twelfth Night*, and when Arviragus carries in the dead Fidele, where music is called for, some Elizabethan piece would be the best choice.

I have said nothing about Shakespearean opera, because it lies apart from the subject of this article. But if we adopt the morality of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, his plots are not sacrosanct; and in every case of Shakespearean opera it is better to forget him altogether and regard it solely as the work of the composer and his librettist. It is difficult to do so, of course, just as we cannot help comparing Marlowe's and Goethe's versions of the Faust legend. But if we do not do so, we mar the pleasure that Verdi, Nicolai, Goetz and Vaughan Williams can give us.

Shakespeare can be censured for his laxity in not seeing through the Press authentic texts of his plays, complete with expository prefaces on morals and religion; he may also be censured for not stating explicitly what music he required.

STANLEY A. BAYLISS.

SCIENCE AND MUSIC

Is the hierarchy of the sciences mathematics is present as king. It occupies this proud position because although it serves all the other sciences, lending to them its logic and its methods of calculation, it is above them all, for, unlike them, it is not empirical but deductive—a self-contained system that will not be upset by mere facts of observation. It is not, however, the regulator of the sciences, which marks out the field to each and pronounces on the ultimate validity of their results. This is the function of philosophy. But philosophy and mathematics have always been closely related in spite of the fact that one philosophical tradition has followed the line of the humarer letters. The connection goes back to Pythagoras and is active to-day when philosophers are busy unravelling the implications of Einstein's mathematical relativity; from Descartes to Whitehead mathematics has continually led into philosophy. Mathematics is similarly, though more ambiguously, related to music. From the very beginning, when the mathematical ratios of the scale first became evident to the experimenters with the monochord, until the present day when in public schools the teachers of mathematics quite commonly make themselves expert in the fugues of Bach, the affinity of the two subjects for a certain type of mind (which sometimes runs also to chess) has been undeniable. People with literary training have an outlet for their artistic impulses in letters and may remain literary, but the scientist can find congenial gratification in the obscurely related yet outwardly and obviously very different activity of music.

Yet every attempt to give a mathematical account of musical phenomena comes to grief. Scholars who pay the greatest respect to Plato's views about God or the State dismiss as fanciful those of his aesthetic speculations which he bases on mathematics. The acoustics of single tones can be formulated in mathematical terms but mathematics gives so little help towards forming an aesthetic judgment on them as to be quite negligible. The smoothness of the primary concords, the octave, the fourth and the fifth, can be explained mathematically, but the ear immediately kicks over the traces, pronounces the fourth a virtual discord—is not the use of a 6/4 chord hedged about with cautions and prohibitions?—and anyhow prefers the mathematically poor ratios of major and minor thirds as smoother concords than the mathematically blameless fifth. Similarly mathematical tuning led to such an impasse of musical development in the fruitful field of key relationship that error had to be called

in to devise equal temperament and emancipate music from the purity of mathematics.

A professor of mathematics of Harvard⁽¹⁾ has been tempted once more to enter this tangled field, enlarging it to include the spatial arts, notably the arabesques involved in ornaments, vases and tiles. Wherever possible he states the problems in mathematical terms and seeks a mensural solution to the problem of beauty in art. But his attempt is foredoomed to failure because the subject-matter is non-mensurable. You may make an arithmetical notation of the diatonic chords, if you like, and play all sorts of tricks with the figures you thus obtain, but the results are vitiated by two considerations : (a) the values 1, 2, 3, 4, etc., which you give to the notes of these chords, and even the ordinary arithmetical nomenclature of intervals employed for the harmony of a figured bass are arbitrary and have no arithmetical validity at all, and (b) in any case the quality of the harmony, expressed in the lowly terms of Prout's text-books as 'good,' 'possible,' 'bad,' depends not on the chords but on the progression. This last consideration has not been overlooked by the author, and he has therefore been reduced to assigning arbitrary numerical values to some one hundred and forty-four types of chordal sequence. He thus gets his figures, his 'aesthetic measure,' expressed in mathematical terms, but the figures have no validity beyond Prout's 'good,' 'possible' and 'bad,' and indeed the author concludes lamely that 'fortunately the aesthetic classification of the principal types of chordal sequences has been effected empirically.' The whole point of employing mathematics in any field where mathematics is applicable is to avoid the empirical element.

But even when we come to a properly empirical science like psychology and apply it to music the actual results are often disappointing : elaborate scientific investigation only serves to confirm conclusions which musicians intuitively reached as soon as they trusted their ears. Nevertheless the field of musical psychology does appear to be worth working in. Music is one of the most pure and extraordinary products of the human mind and should therefore be extremely valuable to the psychologist, even if the psychologist cannot tell the musician much that he does not already know. Music cannot teach the mathematician anything which he did not know, but it can tell the psychologist a great deal about the workings of the human mind.

For some years after it broke loose from philosophy psychology was regarded with suspicion by the empirical scientists because its subject-

(1) George D. Birkhoff: '*Aesthetic Measure.*' Reviewed in *MUSIC AND LETTERS*, July, 1933.

matter, human behaviour, hitherto dealt with by introspection and by the deductive methods of philosophy, seemed to be recalcitrant to empirical methods. Physics is still the perfect science because it obtains its facts empirically—they can all be isolated in the laboratory—and then deals with them mathematically. Chemistry is nearly as good but there is more experiment and less mathematics (the President of the British Association has just told us that so far biochemistry has obtained all its data by quantitative methods), and then there is a declension among the sciences as more and more incalculable, non-mensurable indissoluble elements are involved—biology, physiology, medicine, then psychology, and last, and worst, economics. These sciences, whose subject-matter is living organisms, cannot hope to approach the precision of the inorganic sciences, and it is possible to deal with psychology and economics from a non-scientific, a humane, almost an artistic point of view. In biology, for instance, notably in animal breeding, a great deal has been done by guesswork and old wives' tales, though the more the science progresses naturally the more one will rely on the application of scientific method to them. Thus one prefers to be treated in illness by a scientifically trained medical practitioner rather than by a village herbalist. But the point should be clear: these sciences are not yet, and perhaps never can be, wholly scientific. Biology will be more scientific than medicine, medicine than psychology, but economics can never hope to achieve the scientific validity of chemistry. Psychology then and economics, though not strict sciences, yield a great deal of new and valuable information about human character and the nature of wealth, if scientific method is applied to them as far as their subject-matter permits. This is now clearly realised and economists as well as psychologists are admitted to the British Association.

One factor in this making an honest woman of Psychology since her abduction from the respectable home of her parent Philosophy, has been the use of statistics. Statistics enables quantitative values to be applied to non-quantitative phenomena and shows, not indeed precise and scientifically reliable facts, but broad tendencies whose general validity will not be disputed. Thus introspection, which was under a very heavy scientific cloud for long enough, has come back unabashed into psychology. Questionnaires are issued and we are invited to express ourselves at length and in unscientific language, to describe our inner reactions which no man, neither ourselves nor another, can isolate and analyse. The results can then be thrown into statistical form and certain broad conclusions will emerge with reasonable scientific certainty.

A good deal of work of this kind has been done on listening to music. Only a year ago Dr. Vernon Lee published her penetrating and subtle analysis of listening.⁽²⁾ Now comes Dr. C. S. Myers, whose most recent work has been done on industrial psychology, putting together the results of his observations on music spread over a period of twenty-five years.⁽³⁾ He is less concerned than Dr. Vernon Lee to classify listeners than to make an anatomy of listening. The distinction is not in practice very important because most people probably listen to music in different ways at different times. He is concerned to identify these different ways, while Dr. Vernon Lee's object is to identify psychological types. Naturally the results of the two workers very largely correspond, but there is one striking omission in Dr. Myers's analysis—what Dr. Lee calls Apollinian listening, the attention solely to the purely musical relationships. It is just possible to dispute the existence of this and to resolve it into the other factors mentioned by Dr. Myers—the intra-subjective, the suggestive, the critical, and the characterising—though the person who would do this has a hard case to sustain. Dr. Myers does not do this, however; he merely leaves out all mention of it. He comes very near to it in one brief paragraph which goes deeper than its few words indicate: 'It is indeed through this detachment from the human self of art-material and of its immediate experience, and through its contemplation for its own sake, that awareness of beauty becomes possible.' A whole aesthetic philosophy is implied here, and the defects of his pamphlet are just that he has tried to put more than will go into thirty-six pages. Another interesting feature of his pamphlet which may also account for the absence of specific mention of 'purely musical' appreciation is his use of the evolutionary method borrowed from biology which has always been approved even by those who distrusted introspection. He arrives at his different mental attitudes towards music by considering 'the probable stages in mental evolution which have enabled man to experience music as he does, and the earliest functions which human music appears to have served.' This quasi-biological account of the development of the musical faculty, though necessarily to some extent speculative, is pregnant with significance, and it gives to his treatment of the subject of appreciation a broad sweep and philosophic range that compensates for the rather scant consideration of individual points necessitated by the lecture form in which it is couched.

A good deal of psychological work on music, however, goes the other

(2) *Music and Its Lovers*. Reviewed in **MUSIC AND LETTERS**.

(3) *The Psychology of Musical Appreciation*. Memoirs, Proceedings of Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society. Vol. 22.

way about its task and takes the form of an intensive experimental study on some particular phenomenon : it may be Absolute Pitch⁽⁴⁾ or it may be a case of synesthesia,⁽⁵⁾ in which the smallest details are faithfully recorded, deductions drawn from them when completed, and theories elaborated in the light of these conclusions. Nothing of far-reaching significance emerged from the ten-year study of a girl's colour-sensations when a simple ascending scale was played on various instruments. She had definite synesthesiae of colour and sound for every semitone in the octave at whatever pitch : C was red, D was green, E was yellow, F orange, G blue, A purple and B brown, not the order, be it observed, of the spectrum. But apart from the interest of this single case it enabled the experimenter to conclude that such cases of colour-hearing are not normal, but that when they do occur it is in people with a highly organised nervous system, that it does not depend on mere association, that its elements vary with the individual and follow no general law, and that of all the theories put forward to account for the phenomenon of ' photism ' that of a sensory-reflex best meets the case. We do, therefore, at least know that it is not much use disputing about the colour of keys, but that since each individual has his own set of reflexes there need be no disputing that many musicians do enjoy (or suffer from) colour-hearing.

All these investigations, it may be noted, are concerned with the hearing end of music. No one seems to be able to investigate the creative process. What a flood of light it might let in on the normal workings of our minds, which are mysterious enough in all conscience, if some psychologist could carry even one stage further the penetration of that central mystery of creative imagination ! And music offers such a good approach to that last inner stronghold. Of all the sciences psychology seems to promise the most fruitful results when applied to music, though we must not forget what the physicists have done for us in enabling the musician to fling an orchestral programme round the earth in an imperceptible period of time and to write it on a vulcanite tablet for the archaeologist of the future to unravel. But the nature of the thing itself, the essence which Plato and the Harvard professor hoped to extract by mathematics, this will give up its secret, if it ever does so, to that humanest of the sciences, that scientifically guided humanity, psychology, in which scientific and philosophical method work together in fruitful collaboration.

FRANK HOWES.

(4) *Psychological Monographs*. Vol. XLII. No. 6. 1932. American Psychological Association. By Laurence A. Petram, of John Hopkins University.

(5) *Theories of Synesthesia in the Light of a Case of Colour-Hearing*. *Human Biology*. Vol. 5, No. 2. May, 1933.

'APT FOR VOICES'

No one who was fortunate enough to be present at the Festival of English Music, A.D. 1200-1700, given, in conjunction with the International Society for Musical Research, at Cambridge, in the beginning of August, can have failed to be impressed by the sensuous beauty of the sound of unaccompanied voices in the Medieval and Tudor music, quite apart from the merits of the different compositions. Whether it was the King's College choir singing Tudor church music, or the University Madrigal Society (like the King's choir, superbly trained by Mr. Bernhard Ord) singing madrigals from punts moored under King's Bridge in the falling light of a hot summer evening, or, perhaps best of all, the University Musical Society under Dr. Rootham singing part of the anonymous early Tudor mass 'O quam suavis'—on each of these occasions one was constantly thinking 'how "apt for voices." ' Indeed, the title of the mass seems to sum up, in three words, all the choral works heard at the Festival: 'O quam suavis.' Of how much choral music since the Tudor days can one say either 'O quam suavis,' or, more important, how 'apt for voices'? Furthermore, wherein, exactly, lies the secret of the 'aptness' of the music of this period?

It is not to be found in the intricate counterpoint, the subtleties of rhythm, the experiments in modulation, or in any other technical device of composition, but rather in, as it were, the 'instrumentation,' wherein the composers show their complete understanding of the possibilities and limitations of the human voice. The word 'instrumentation' is used advisedly, for the voice *is* an instrument, albeit an instrument of very definite limits of range, agility and power. (This article is not concerned with the highly trained voice used as a solo instrument, but only with the voice used as an orchestral, or rather as a choral instrument.)

The voice in the sixteenth century had a compass which roughly corresponded to that of its string counterpart, the viol, so that a choir of six voices would have a range equal to that of a chest of viols. It is significant that much of the secular music of the period is described as 'apt for voices or viols.' Now the chief glory of a madrigal, it must be admitted, lies in its sound, rather than its look on paper. That is to say, it lies not so much in the device of

imitation, canon, inversion, etc., all of which are liable to be passed over at a first hearing, as in the actual instrumentation, or the using of one group of voices against another, and the employment of the many possible combinations of six different types of voice. The range of the voices, especially of the soprano part, is often great, but for the most part, the voices are all used in their most effective registers, and the parts proceed, generally, by step rather than in leaps, making the whole sound wonderfully smooth.

As time went on, composers began to combine voices and viols, thus forming only another variation of the 'broken consort' so often employed in the purely instrumental music. Later still, in the time of Purcell, came the development of the viol, and, at the time when the possibilities of this instrument had been fully explored, the gradual introduction of the 'airy violin,' with its more penetrating tone, greater range, and opportunities for greater agility. The voice was still able to compete with its string cousins, though it is worth noting that by this time the expression 'apt for voices or viols' had been dropped. It was found that a more solid form of choral technique (vertical writing as compared with the horizontal writing of earlier times) preserved a better balance between voices and instruments than if the two were still treated as interchangeable. This vertical writing reached its greatest heights in the works of Handel. Even then, it will be seen, composers were experimenting with all their ingenuity, in an attempt to combine effectively the new instruments and the old instruments developed far beyond their former powers with voices which in the nature of things could not develop at all, except as to their technique.

Since the days of Handel the problem of finding ways of combining these unchanged natural instruments with the improved and man-made ones has proved more and more difficult of solution. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century, new and more powerful instruments were constantly being added to the orchestra, while the choir of voices remains (with the exception of the gradual disappearance of the true male alto) in exactly the same state of development as in the sixteenth century, and is no longer able to compete on equal terms with the orchestra. In an attempt to overcome this state of affairs, composers are compelled to resort to one of two methods. Either the voices must be strained beyond their powers, thus losing their peculiar characteristic timbre in a vain effort to preserve it, or, alternatively, the number of voices must be increased out of all proportion to the number of instruments, with the result that many of the latter are completely submerged by the weight of vocal tone,

and, for all the effect they produce, might as well be silent. Listen to a performance of the Choral Symphony with the score, and notice how much of the orchestral detail is completely inaudible. Even in Handel's time voices were treated on equal terms with instruments, and it would be an illuminating experience to hear a performance of, say, '*Messiah*' as it was originally produced, that is with voices and instruments in approximately the same proportion, although, to modern ears, the penetrating tone of so many oboes might appear somewhat harsh.

It is difficult to trace to its beginnings, with any degree of certainty, this failure to realise that the possibilities of the new instruments were fast outstripping those of the voice. Beethoven, both in the Choral Symphony and the '*Missa Solemnis*,' undoubtedly taxes the voices beyond their capabilities, using them in their extreme ranges, and writing for them passages that are neither grateful to sing nor, at times, even pleasant to hear. The gradual growth of opera, too, has helped the decline. Voices have to express the emotions of passion, anger, grief, joy, etc.; but which, while possible with one or two voices, and those highly trained, more often than not fails of its effect when applied to a choir. The voices, while possibly expressing the required emotion, frequently lose their characteristics as voices, and indulge in a series of barks and whines and shouts. These effects may possibly heighten the drama, but not by any stretch of the imagination can such writing be described as '*apt for voices*'. It is now becoming more the rule than the exception to read, after the performance of a choral work, something to the effect that the choir at the conclusion showed signs of the strain imposed on them, or—at best—that they stood the strain well. Why should they be strained? Imagine being told that, at the end of a recital, or even of a concerto, '*the piano showed signs of the strain imposed on it*'! It is unthinkable. Yet with voices it is a common occurrence.

With a few exceptions this tendency to strain voices beyond their powers seems to be spreading. That present very popular success, in some ways deservedly so, Walton's '*Belshazzar*', contains pages and pages which are really nothing more than '*the shouts of them that feast*'. No doubt this is highly dramatic, but again it is emphatically not '*apt for voices*'.

If we consider, in passing, the modern treatment of stringed instruments, we shall find very much the same state of affairs. In a vain attempt to explore any further possibilities of the instruments, composers are driven to writing music entirely unsuited to them. The unfortunate violin is treated as a combination of whistle, guitar and cymbalum. There is undoubtedly a pressing need for a new

instrument. It could not have been altogether an accident that the violin made its appearance at a time when the viol had been exploited to its utmost limits. In the case of the piano, which is in much the same position, the appearance of the Neo-Bechstein holds out definite hopes of a new instrument; and it is not too much to hope that the ingenuity of man will before long produce an instrument to supplement, if not actually to replace, the violin.

But what of the voice? We cannot hope for a new kind of voice, nor can the existing instrument be further developed. Neither would such a change be desirable. The human voice is still the most beautiful of all instruments, a fact which is in danger of being forgotten when it is subjected to such ill-treatment as it receives at some hands to-day.

There are still, of course, composers who treat voices with understanding, and these are for the most part English. This is not altogether surprising when it is remembered that (as Dr. Fellowes says in his '*The English Madrigal Composers*') 'in England choral music has ever been the most marked feature of the National genius.' And again, in the same work, 'the continuity of the existence of an English school of composition for no less than five hundred years cannot be denied, even if it must be admitted frankly that at several periods our composers did not rise above mediocrity. Now this unbroken continuity, which is without a parallel in the history of any other European nation, *is to be traced almost entirely in the field of vocal music*' (the italics are mine). The danger lies in the too slavish imitation of the technique of the modern European schools, where, with the notable exception of the field of opera in Italy, the voice is not, and has not been for hundreds of years, understood to anything like the extent that it has been in our own country. If only our composers would concentrate on the further development of our own vocal traditions it may be that England, where, three hundred years ago, the most perfect vocal music was produced, may once again (inspired by an unbroken tradition, existent but in danger of being overlooked) give a lead to the world, and produce choral music of which it can at least be said that it is 'apt for voices.'

NEVILLE ESCOMBE.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY AND MUSIC

WE have heard a great deal in recent years of the high place music occupied in the lives of our sixteenth century ancestors. Some time ago a writer in *MUSIC AND LETTERS* cast a certain doubt on the evidence on which we have been basing our opinion, alleging that details quoted by historians refer to exceptionally musical families and cannot be taken as typical; but such objections do not really weaken our conviction that Tudor and Stuart England were intensely musical, for that conviction is justified by the traces music has left on the philosophic, social and artistic character of the age, and does not solely depend on isolated instances of the cultivation of music. In literature the traces are particularly important. 'Music and poetry have ever been considered brothers,' said Purcell; and in the sixteenth century their relations were so close that many features of either art must remain obscure without a knowledge of the other.

In considering the effect of music on literature Sir Philip Sidney is a figure that deserves attention, not because he was exceptionally musical but because of the position he occupied in his own generation and has occupied ever since in the imaginations of English people. His achievements hardly seem to explain his unique reputation. No doubt social prestige has something to do with it; but that will not entirely account for the lavish regard of contemporaries. His personality and interests were an epitome of the tendencies of the age. He seemed to embody an ideal of cultured knighthood after which the Renaissance was striving, and he helped to consummate the triumph of the Renaissance outlook in English art and life. In literature his contact with the leaders of thought in Italy and France enabled him to lead in the movement for a new poetic style that was gathering momentum through the 1580's. More completely than Spencer he represents a break with the decadent traditions of earlier English poetry and absorption of the Italian manner. We can therefore learn a good deal about the place of music in Elizabethan life and literature by observing its influence on this typical figure, whom all the great poets of the ripest Elizabethan period honour as a pioneer.

Sidney was in the direct *trouvère* tradition. He was essentially an aristocratic amateur, and that class had from the days of the troubadours contributed a stream of sensitive refinement to poetry

and music. For literature Sidney had the devotion of a professional even in the midst of a busy public career. But he does not seem to have been especially musical; at least, he seems to have regretted that his musical education had not been more profound. But he judged himself by the high standard of his own day. His very desire for a profound knowledge of the art is evidence of the esteem it held in his own circle and social class; and the influence of music that is discernible in his literary work shows what potent effect it was having on literature, when even he, who did not regard himself as extremely well versed in it, exhibits symptoms found in much of the literature of the time.

The Sidneys and their relations as a whole were a musical family. In the Penshurst papers we find many references to the purchase of instruments and provisions for the tuition of various young members of the family. For some reason or other Philip's education was deficient in this respect; and in later life he bitterly regretted what he had missed in youth. When he was in Venice as a young man he said in a letter home that he was trying to get a notion of music; and, though it is impossible to locate his teacher, it was probably one of the most distinguished masters of the day, for Venice was the scene of a brilliant musical life. Somewhat later, in a letter preserved and reprinted in Sir Sidney Lee's *Sidneiana*, he wrote advising his brother to study music. 'You will not believe,' he says, 'what want I find of it in my melancholy times.' Apparently, however, what he lacked was merely the ability to sing and play on an instrument—an important accomplishment in those who designed to follow the manners of Castiglione's Courtier. He was, indeed, a discriminating amateur and patron of music. Much of his time was spent at Salisbury, which in the next generation at least was well known as a musical centre (see Aubrey's *History of Wilts*). He, himself, seems to have organised concerts there. His cousin, Sir Arthur Bassett, in a letter to Sir Edward Shadling under the date February 6, 1584 (new style), mentions one Thomas Richards, a musician, and continues: 'I have given some commendation of the man and his instrument knowledge, but chiefly for the rareness of his instrument with wires, unto sundry of my good friends, namely to my cousin Sir Philip Sidney, who doth expect to your man at Salisbury before the VIIth of March next, where there be an honourable assembly and receipt of many gentlemen of good calling.' (*Sidneiana*, p. 81.)

It is clear, then, that Sidney moved in a musical circle, and indeed music was very fashionable with his class generally; nor was he a mere passive member of this circle. He seems to have been an

active patron of musicians of different kinds. The letter just quoted shows him as a patron of professional performers: of composers, too, he no doubt took friendly notice. A number of his lyrics have been found set to music by contemporaries, some in Robert Dowland's *Musicall Banquet*, some in manuscripts. None of these solo settings has much merit as music; but they all have this in common—that the music slavishly follows the verbal rhythm. Though this may seem dull to us, it is just what would be likely to please a literary man of Sidney's time. Sidney was a leading member of the Cambridge Areopagus, and all the neo-classicists were particularly anxious that verbal accent and quantity should be exactly reproduced in musical settings of words. It was to effect this more easily that the Bardi group in Italy and Campion in England declared themselves unreservedly in favour of the monodic rather than the contrapuntal style. It is therefore not too fanciful to suggest that such of the settings as we possess of Sidney's lyrics may have been composed for his special satisfaction by composers whom he befriended. In favour of this speculation we may add that one of the settings—in Dowland's *Musicall Banquet*—is by Charles Tessier, a French musician who came to England as a Court lutenist, and published a book of airs in London in 1597. He dedicated this book to Lady Penelope Riche, the Stella of Sidney's sonnets, which appears to imply a connection with Sidney's circle. More surmise than positive evidence is available on these points; but one feels on safe ground in imagining a number of composers whom Sidney employed for different purposes and who set his lyrics, for his own satisfaction and to display their own voices, to his circle.

Nothing is more certain than that Sidney had considerable sensibility to music and considerable acquaintance with it. In his prose writings musical illustrations spring readily to his mind, and they are always apt, accurate and vivid. Thus in the *Defense of Poesie*, when he is stating the historian's case, the contention that history is most useful of sciences because it gives applications of the philosopher's abstract theory, he puts the whole matter briefly in a musical figure: 'If he (the moral philosopher) make the Songe-booke, I (the historian) put the learners hande to the lute.'⁽¹⁾ In the *Arcadia* Sidney's musical allusions have a definiteness and accuracy that is indeed general among his contemporaries, but which is remarkable in comparison with allusion in subsequent literature. When Shelley or Tennyson mention musical sound it is always vague and elusive; it never comes from any definite and describable source or

(1) Gregory Smith, *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, I, 163.

bears any character by which musicians are accustomed to distinguish tone qualities. In other words, it is never properly imaged in the poet's mind and reflects no true musical experience. But an Elizabethan poet scarcely ever is vague on such matters, unless he deliberately wants to be. He always knows just what effect he wants and how to convey it to the reader. So in the *Arcadia* we find that whenever a song is sung by one of the characters—and nearly all the verse is supposed to be sung, for the Elizabethans did not look upon a lyric as complete until it had music as well as words—we are told what instrument is supposed to accompany the song. In a primitive way Sidney anticipates Bach's obbligatos, for the instrument is chosen to heighten the emotional colour of the song. However unreal Sidney's pastoral world may be, in musical details it is remarkably concrete. Every musical reference is clearly visualised in terms of the music that the author himself knew so well, and his pastoral world is literally filled with music. Turning over a few pages at random, one comes upon numerous allusions of this kind :—

' . . . she might perceive the same voice, deliver itself unto musicall tunes, and with a base Lyra gave forth this songe . . . '
 ' But as if the Shepheard that lay before her, had bene organes, which were onely to be blowen by her breath, she had no sooner ended with the joyning her sweete lips together, but that he recorded to her musick this rurall poesie . . . '

' . . . She haply saw a Lute, upon the belly of which Gynecia had written this song . . . '

' . . . Which she taking a Citterne to her, did laye to Auroras chardge with these wel songe verses . . . '

' Zelmane, first saluting the muses with a base voyal hong hard by her . . . '

It was not only learned music that Sidney knew. English popular music reached its greatest perfection in that age; and its influence on the poets of the period is one of the most persistent as it is also one of the subtlest forces at work then. It was impossible to be alive in such an age and not respond to the fine ballad and dance tunes with which London and the country alike abounded and which have become the wonder of subsequent ages. No snobbery would prevent Sidney from enjoying them to the full. He confesses that the old song of Percy and Douglas (*Chevy Chase*), though played only by a blind crowder, moved him like a trumpet. One other dance tune moved him sufficiently for him to write a song to it. There is nothing unusual in this. Many of the most reputable and learned Elizabethan poets wrote verses to popular tunes,⁽²⁾ and in this way, among others,

⁽²⁾ See, for instance, my note on the August Eclogue of the Shephearde's Calender in *The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 9 (1933), No. 33, p. 54.

popular tunes exerted no small influence on the development of poetic metres and rhythm. Sidney's ballad was to the celebrated *Greensleaves*, and it was sung in William Percy's *Faery Pastoral* (IV 3).⁽⁵⁾ The dainty rhythm was new to English poetry of any level above that of the rough street ballad, and it is not difficult to see that all the attractiveness of the poem comes from the sprightly movement of the tune.

The time hath been that a tawdry lace
Or a bonnet for my Lady's grace,
A Ring of a Rish or needle's case,
Would make any Lady to love me.

Fie, fie upon honesty, fie,
Your head is full of jealousy,
There is no fault in my Lady
For to suspect the contrary.

But now the world hath grown so rich,
They will have it be it ne'er so mich,
Yet by your leave they will keep no tich
The which doth not a little move me.

Besides close contact with musicians in England Sidney made the acquaintance of French and Italian music. Neither the madrigal nor the air had any real footing in England when Sidney set out on his Continental travels, and he soon found himself in countries much more in the centre of activity than his own. When he was in Paris in the 'seventies Baïf and Courville were founding their Academie de Musique et de Poesie, a neo-classical experiment high in the favour of the intelligentsia and sure to appeal to a member of the Areopagus. Baïf's *Eclogues* undoubtedly influenced the neo-classical experiments in the *Arcadia*. The annual *puy* at Evreux on St. Cecilia's Day was another important literary and musical event of which he must have heard a good deal; and Miss Mona Wilson, one of his biographers, has made the tentative suggestion that the seventh song in *Astrophel and Stella* was written for a similar occasion and modelled on the French songs he had heard. There was also excellent popular music to be heard in Paris. Marot's translations of the Psalms, written to popular tunes, were being sung everywhere. We do know that Sidney imitated them in his own translations, often writing to the

(5) *Works of Sidney*, ed. Feuillerat, II, 342.

same tunes; so that indirectly his poetry thus imbued the rhythms of French popular tunes.

In Italy it was the same. Sidney's original contribution to English poetry lies in the metrical and rhythmical variety he brought to it in a period of stiffness and poverty of invention; and most of his innovations derive ultimately from Italy. It was no accident, however, that most of them were measures very common in the Italian musical volumes. This is characteristic of the progress of the Italian style in English literature. Wyatt naturalised just those strains that prevailed in the musical volumes at the time when the frottola was giving way to the madrigal; and a little later the Petrarchan convention came to these shores hand in hand with the Italian madrigal technique, both being sponsored by figures like Thomas Watson, who wrote some of the first sonnets and produced the first edition in England of Marenzio. The fact is that the rhythmical uncertainty of English verse was so acute that it was incapable of absorbing any fresh stream in terms of speech rhythm, and it was only with the support of music that new measures could be attempted or borrowed from foreign sources. Hence we must imagine Sidney learning Italian measures not as metrical schemes but as tunes to which he fitted English texts in imitation of the Italian originals. Indeed, in the case of many of the rhythms and metrical schemes that were most novel in English he clearly states the tunes that he had in mind in composing them. Thus in the 1598 folio of the *Sonets*: 'All my sense thy sweetness gained' is headed 'To the tune of a Neapolitan Villanell'; 'No, no, no, no,' to the tune of a Neapolitan song, which beginneth: 'No, no, no, no'; 'Sleep, baby mine,' to the tune 'Basciami vita mia'; 'The fire to see my woes' to the tune of 'Non credo già che pui infelice amante'; and 'The Nightingale' to the same tune. These are all well-known Italian tunes. To a lesser extent the same kind of influence crept into his work from other languages, too, 'O fair, o sweet, when I do look on thee' is to a Spanish song, 'So tu senora no dueles di me,' and 'Who hath his fancy pleased' to 'Wilhelmus van Nassau,' a famous Dutch tune.

None of the ways we have mentioned in which music affected the work of Sidney is at all peculiar to him. Each might be paralleled in many other authors of the same period. But these brief remarks on the most representative literary figure of the Elizabethan age will serve to give a slight indication how completely a writer of that time was surrounded by musical influence, and of the kind of ways in which it moulded his literary work. In the individual writer we get hints only of the fundamental motives behind the period. When we

come to study the period as a whole in detail, sensing the cumulative effect of hints learned from both poets and musicians, we see that the relation of music and poetry in the period was organic; that the whole character of literature was being continually decided by the musical connections and interests of the writers, just as music was constantly yielding to the suggestions of literature. Music is thus one of the prime factors underlying the culture of the Renaissance; and it is this that justifies us in extolling the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the supreme age of English music.

Bruce Pattison.

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C. B. O.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Songs of Praise (Enlarged Edition). Oxford University Press. 6s. n.
The English Hymnal. New music edition. Oxford University Press. 6s.

As regards the music—the most beautiful melodies of all ages and various places are in the first of these books: no less than thirty-three hymns are set to tunes composed or harmonised by Bach and there are many traditional melodies. There is very little plain song, but numbers of descants and *faux bourdons*. At the Summer School of Church Music held at St. Nicholas College it was decided to print in their quarterly magazine suggested hymns for each Sunday for the users of *Ancient and Modern* and *The English Hymnal*, but by universal consent this was not considered necessary in the case of *Songs of Praise*. Higher tribute could not have been given.

The words on the whole are very fine, some being poems of the highest merit. One finds among the authors the names of Addison, Milton, Shakespeare, Shelley, Herrick, Quarles, Coleridge, Whittier, George Herbert, Matthew Arnold, Emily and Anne Brontë, Browning, Kingsley, Christina Rossetti, Bridges, Masefield, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Laurence Binyon, besides the many well-known and famous hymn-writers.

Some of the words might be considered too exalted for an ordinary congregation, as, for instance, Milton's 'Ring out, ye crystal spheres' (set, by the way, to Geoffrey Shaw's delicious tune—'Like a peal of bells'), or Browning's 'Then welcome each rebuff'; or 'There's heaven above and night by night I look right through its gorgeous roof'; or Shelley's 'The world's great age begins anew'; or Emily Brontë's 'No coward soul is mine.'

Some of the modern words might be thought too homely or too trivial, such as No. 396 (P. Dearmer), 'The lambs and the calves and the foals that are born.' No. 592 (P. Dearmer), 'Let pipes advance, with strings and dance!' No. 11 (Eleanor Farjeon), 'Garden, give your gayest flowers.' No. 692 (Jan Struther), 'For swift and gallant horses.'

Again there are others which seem to have no part or lot in *Songs of Praise*, notably James Stephen's 'Little things that run and quail,' which is a pathetic prayer for forgiveness addressed to suffering animals. Doctrinally *Songs of Praise* is mainly the hymn-book of the moderate and the modern. The teaching of the Sacramental and Saints' Day hymns is greatly modified—hymns of the 'O Paradise' type are mostly eliminated, and one notices that the children's hymns follow the dictates of modern child psychology, which would keep from the young all teaching about the Cross. This view hardly coincides with what the Founder of the Kingdom of God said as to the capacity of children to receive its mysteries!

The English Hymnal, first published twenty-seven years ago, appears this year in a new musical edition. The hymns remain entirely

unaltered, so making the introduction of its hundred new tunes possible for all, as only new choir books are needed. There is no doubt excellent reason for this, but it shuts out many fine hymns, as well as many fine tunes, which cannot find words to suit them.

This is essentially a Liturgical hymn-book—it contains all the office hymns and introits, besides many Communion and Saints' Day hymns. Though the preface of the 1906 edition says it is not a party book, it is no doubt especially suited to an Anglo-Catholic type of service.

Among its many excellent points may be mentioned the following:—

- (1) Words are as far as possible as their authors wrote them.
- (2) Tunes are pitched to suit the congregation: choir-boys are not considered, the tunes hardly ever going higher than a man can sing and unison singing is provided for.
- (3) The proper speed of each hymn is indicated and the older rhythm of many of the Psalter tunes has been restored with the 'gathering' note, as, for example, in 'St. Anne' and the 'Old Hundredth.'

The chief feature of the new edition is that all the plainsong tunes are completely re-harmonised and have new accompaniments, written by Mr. J. H. Arnold.

Among the hundred new tunes may be mentioned:—Würzburg (127), Birmingham (429), Melling (373), Vision (198), Stracathro (445), Birling (274), England's Lane (309), Grafton (38), Miletus (381), Corona (381), King's Weston (368), Simeon (320), St. Botolph (419), Harts (177), High Road (427), and Marching (503).

Country choirs and organists will be glad that Dr. Vaughan Williams's fine and popular tune, 'Sine Nomine,' has for the first time been written with the opening bar alike in each verse.

MARY STEWART.

Minder om Niels W. Gade. Kendte Mænd og Kvinders Erindringer.
Utgivne af Foreningen 'Niels W. Gades Minde.' Samlede og
redigerede af William Behrend. København, J. H. Schultz
Forlag. 1930.

This book is best looked upon as a work of pious remembrance of the Danish composer N. W. Gade, who is perhaps the best known of all Danish composers. It sets out to preserve while there is yet time personal memories of his character and human relationships. From such a compilation we cannot expect critical evaluation of his works; at most we expect that the reminiscences will help to throw light on them and on the circumstances surrounding their creation. In this respect, it must be confessed, the present work is rather disappointing; many of the contributions are uncritical testimonials to one—the best—side of what must have been a very complicated personality. The contributions which come nearest to our expectations are those of Hedwig von Holstein, taken from her diaries and letters published in Leipzig in 1900, and the extracts from the notebooks of the composer's son Felix Gade. The first of these gives a lively, if somewhat coloured picture of Gade's early days in Leipzig and at the Gewandhaus; the

second has much interesting information about his work in the Conservatorium in Copenhagen where his great work was accomplished, and throws light on many aspects of Gade's character. It is perhaps not surprising that at this time, forty years after Gade's death, many of the contributions should be mere vague recollections of youthful contacts; but they do little to increase our knowledge of the composer's life and activities.

F. C. FRANCIS.

Danmarks Sanglege. Udgivne af S. Tvermose Thyregod. Köbenhavn,
Det Schönbergske Forlag. 1931. Danmarks Folkeminder Nr. 38.
Price 10 kroner.

This is an admirable example of the publications of the society Danmarks Folkeminder. It contains an account of no less than 164 traditional singing-games, which the author has collected after many years of enthusiastic research. In this volume he has wisely adopted a classified arrangement, which is the most interesting as well as the most valuable from the point of view of the folklorist, and which has very many advantages over the alphabetical arrangement adopted, for example, in Lady Gomme's Collection of Traditional Games. The human activities which the games illustrate or imitate fall readily into a few well-defined groups and naturally enough these are the same in all countries. Apart, however, from the Scandinavian countries which appear to draw upon a common stock of material, actual parallels of individual games in other countries are not numerous. A few like *Bro Brille* (No. 98), which we know as 'London Bridge is falling down,' *Kærestens Død og Genoplevelse* (No. 80) which corresponds to our 'Mary Brown,' and *Blindebuk* (No. 90) or 'Blindman's Buff' are found in all European countries. Other parallels are only partial or due to direct importation.

Hr. Thyregod gives the words of each game, and a full description of it, and in each case he notes all Danish variants he has met with, and all foreign parallels. In nearly every case the music is given, though in regrettably diminutive size. The production is a model of what such a production should be and we can only hope that similar works from other countries will enable that vast work of comparative folklore, of which Hr. Thyregod dreams, to be accomplished.

F. C. FRANCIS.

First steps in music. By Walford Davies. London: Macmillan. 6s. net.

Besides having been a choir-trainer obtaining results of an unusually high quality, and an organiser of music in war-time which came to have great significance in the special circumstances in which the life of a nation was then cast, Sir Walford Davies was also the first to realise and to use the young potentialities for musical education made available by broadcasting. This new technique made it possible for a vision to be put into practice, and Sir Walford Davies started to test the feasibility of taking not one class at a time, but one hundred. In the present volume he sketches a plan for the management of singing classes of a kind which will not only prepare voices but minds

as well, not only make singers but listeners. He plays with the idea of a Dictatorship, as is the fashion nowadays, but only to discard it. His chief concern is with 'team-spirit,' a typically British product, having the playing-fields as background, and cricket, football, the Scout movement and the O.T.C. as specific activities. Unlike most pedagogues who, having discovered the utility of this team-spirit, stick there, Sir Walford Davies proceeds to find in it an outlet, instead of a hindrance, to individuality. 'Unify the team by releasing the individual.' Members of the singing-team (it is the very young that are here under observation) are to have the chance to 'mould each other into agreed unity.' Eventually this resolves itself into a discussion of, a search for, the right mentality in the teacher. For in the end it is there that the work of inculcating the team-spirit, and then guiding it towards a release of the individual, must stand the test, it is at that point that the curve of the arch must take the strain. One must know the child as an entity before one can know children as a singing-class. The right kind of music teacher is sensitised by a wider culture than that of music alone. But imposed on that he must have the specialist's knowledge of musical pedagogy, and in this handbook (it is in reality addressed to him) he will find much stimulation.

SCOTT GODDARD.

Wort und Ton bei Oswald von Wolkenstein. Von Herbert Löwenstein. Königsberg: Verlag Gräfe und Unzer. n.p.

The subject of this Königsberg dissertation, one of the last of the Minnesänger, was born in 1367 and died in 1445, in both cases in the Tyrol. These details are not to be gathered from Herr Löwenstein's dissertation which is held sternly to a purely musical aspect of the matter, and a scientific one at that. A close examination is made of text and music, both of which Wolkenstein was in the habit of writing. This analysis, in the case of the music, is carried out in a tabulated form of some complexity which contains more than one inexplicable symbol. Here the writer would have been well advised to include an explanatory footnote. It is in the section dealing with Wolkenstein's historical position that the subject is brought within range of general artistic culture. The comparison between a certain type of metrical music (in this case the Minnesang as exemplified in Wolkenstein's work) and gothic art in general is well established and forms the most illuminating part of this treatise for the ordinary reader. Herr Löwenstein makes out a reasonable case for Wolkenstein being considered more as a mediæval musician than as a man of the renaissance. In his work, we are told (it is here that a larger number of musical illustrations would have been useful), the 'Renaissance Affektmusik' is far to seek. Wolkenstein's method of combining words and music evidently is nearer the impersonal fashion of the middle ages.

SCOTT GODDARD.

Beethoven as he lived. By Richard Specht. Translated from the German by Alfred Kalisch. London: Macmillan. 15s. net.

A second reading increases esteem for the author's intentions, though not one's liking for the book. The preface tells what the author has

aimed at. 'His figure . . . not the work.' The present volume 'is no work of independent research, only one of an independent point of view, . . . it is addressed to the plain man.' It is Beethoven's character, the spiritual side of the man, that the author attempts to lay bare. He has 'ventured to create anew the figure of a Master, not from other biographies, but solely from his works, his letters and his sayings, from the reminiscences of his contemporaries, from diaries and, in small details, from verbal tradition.' All these sources of information are valuable, for there is always a chance that from such material something may be discovered that will have some bearing on a man's spiritual life. But 'his works' are the least secure, the most dangerous, ground for an enquiry of this nature. Can one, after all, argue from a man's artistic creation to his life, or *vice versa*, using only our present, relatively clumsy, critical apparatus? One can point to a musician's choice of subject (when a subject exists, either in music joined to a text or given a 'programme') and suggest that probably only a man (Beethoven) of a certain cast of mind would have chosen to set such or such a libretto ('Fidelio') or poem (the Schiller Ode). That states the problem. Deal with unlabelled music in the same way, and the result may be similar to what Richard Specht writes about the string quartets 'whose indescribable greatness and audacity, whose sublime doctrine and mysteries are signs from another world, the longed-for Kingdom of the future.' This tells nothing about Beethoven the man and as little about the music of the quartets; and of all the people before whom such romantic blather should not be put, the plain man stands first, if by 'plain' is meant one whose knowledge of music and of the history of musicians is rudimentary. A prime necessity with a book of this kind is the possession of sufficient practical competence to be able to hold a steady course, continually checking bearings. The voyage with Mr. Specht then becomes more easily supportable, for his sincerity is evident and he has provided more than one page of fine writing. Perhaps the main value of the book is that it is a serviceable example of this type of enthusiastic writing, the type that says ' . . . it is only by leaping to and fro that the shuttle can complete the web' and never realises that any weaver who allowed his shuttle to do that sort of thing, even the most arts-and-crafts hand-loom weaver, would soon find himself without a job.

SCOTT GODDARD.

Chamber Music. By N. Kilburn. New edition, revised, with additional chapters by G. E. H. Abraham. London: Reeves. 7s. 6d. net.

The present edition retains Kilburn's early chapters and has, added to it, a revision of the chapter on the Beethoven quartets, and of the sections on Smetana, Grieg, Franck and Hugo Wolf, with much fresh material on the Russians, a new chapter on modern composers from Reger to Ravel, and one on modern British writers of chamber music. Kilburn's part of the book has some useful information to give about chamber music institutions in this country. His historical survey of the main subject is dry and pedantic. The editor's contributions are very different in style. It is evident that he has been at some pains

to approximate his own style to that of the more plodding Kilburn, and the result is not happy. It would have been better to leave the original in decent obscurity and commission a totally new work from Mr. Abraham. His contributions show ability to review a large expanse of material and to condense into a relatively small space, which is what is needed in the writer of a handbook of this scope and size.

SCOTT GODDARD.

Complete Opera Book. By Gustav Kobbé. London: Putnam. 8s. 6d. net.

This is the seventh reprint since the English edition of 1922. The author died before it could be finished, and Miss Katherine Wright has put through the work according to his plan. The publication has been further brought up to date by the inclusion of modern English and Russian operas. These articles are signed 'F. B.' The information they give is useful and exact (perhaps 'Dame of the British Empire' might mislead a foreigner eager for details of Ethel Smyth). This is a good book of reference, more so than most of its kind. The pictures are interesting and amusing.

SCOTT GODDARD.

Nietzsche. By Gerald Abraham. (Great Lives Series.) Duckworth. 2s.

The life of Nietzsche would seem designed to illustrate the pet themes of the psycho-analysts. In this short biography Mr. Abraham does well to stop at a plain account of the facts and leave the reader to his own conclusions. They seem obvious enough. The boy, born of a long line of preachers and teachers, was brought up by a band of female relatives. The man who was confined in an asylum wrote *The Will to Power*. A probable key to an evaluation is 'that he was a priest—inverted, and a musician—diverted.' But was he not above all a visionary, preaching a philosophy the very realisation of which destroys its essential illusion? And was not the embodiment of his ideals (in Wagner) a failure for that very reason: not because Wagner was found wanting, but because the 'genius-leader of the future' was, like the Messiah, a vision defying practical application?

E. LOCKSPEISER.

Music in My Time. By Hubert J. Foss. Rich & Cowan, Ltd.

Mr. Foss was the right man to write about music in the *In My Time* series. He is about the right age—on the young side perhaps to speak with full authority of pre-War years, but fully safeguarded thereby from the error of his elders who are apt to regard those spacious days as the norm for all time. His present position in the musical profession enables him to see most of the game and his lively mind is alert to pick up any tendencies that are likely to emerge from the present flux. And the right man has found the right clue: that in music as in other spheres of life the twentieth century has not yet, after a third of its course has been run, found its own *zeitgeist* and

certainly not its own expression, that it is on the point of doing so now, and that consequently neither those who still think in terms of the nineteenth century nor those who hail every passing fashion as eternal truth are right about modern music. Nor does Mr. Foss survey the musical scene solely from a musical angle—he is very well aware of what is going on in the world. His own preferences are not concealed, and while many readers will make their own reservations about the opinions expressed, especially when Mr. Foss is obviously reflecting other people's ideas, they must admit that he always gives his reasons for his prejudices.

His book is neither prophecy nor history, but a book of and for to-day—thoughts not only on the present discontents, but also a counting of our many blessings. Let us present his careful balance-sheet in a rough abstract.

The age is one of distribution: even economics is no longer concerned with the problem of the production of wealth but with its distribution. Quantities of music are being produced, and we in England are glad to be once more a musically productive country, though imports still exceed exports. Changes in distribution have extended the musical market, but have somehow disorganised its accepted methods of doing business: concerts, festivals and choral societies are in a bad way. Those who were brought up in the Victorian hey-day can hardly fail to shake their heads over it, but 'to those who are sensible that this is not the final chapter of the last century, not even an appendix to the Edwardian period, the present situation is a hopeful one.' Broadcasting is ambivalent; school music is sound and a warrant for optimism; scholarship is flourishing, though criticism is elderly and nostalgic; opera is dying and its place is being taken by ballet (as in Dr. Dyson's view of 'the progress of music'); the standard of performance is almost too high, if such a thing could be said. And to this is added a critical survey of the music of all living composers.

All this and more Mr. Foss has been able to write straight out of his experience. Perhaps some of the writing would have been a little more pointed if it had been less rapid, and chapter-headings would have been useful to the reader as a sketch-map of the tangled country over which the author leads him with a speed characteristic of our time. But if anyone complains that there is more of shrewd estimates than of penetrating analysis, Mr. Foss can answer truly that he is making a survey not writing a philosophy of music.

F. HOWES.

Shawn the Dancer. By Katherine S. Dreier. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. 1933. 12s. 6d.

Out of the eighty-one pages in this book over fifty contain photographs of Shawn dancing, or scenes from ballets created by Shawn, and lists and notes of these hundred or more productions. As a record of an immense creative effort and achievement these pages speak for themselves; the fine photographs are, indeed, invaluable permanent records of the dancer's many beautiful and curious poses.

In addition there is a short biographical sketch and an essay by Katherine S. Dreier, a foreword by H. Niedecken-Gebhard, and an

introduction by Hans Hildebrandt, Professor of Art in the Institute of Technology, Stuttgart. In reading the introduction one is struck with a curiosity concerning Miss Katherine Dreier which makes one forget momentarily that this is a book about Shawn. Her psychological portrait of Shawn is likely to encourage an interest in Modern Abstract Art even amongst those in this country who are not yet sickened by the 'old world' and its 'satiated culture.'

Edwin Shawn's career as a dancer (for which he abandoned his original intention of becoming a minister) began before he was twenty; a few years later—in 1912—he had established his own School of Dancing in Los Angeles, with a staff of three, the nucleus of a small company with whom later he toured through America. His reputation in that continent, in England and Europe as a dancer, choreographer and producer is well established. He has founded with Ruth St. Denis the Denishawn School of Dancing, and has recently been invited to join the Faculty of Springfield College, the leading institute of physical education in the United States.

In her short essay Miss Dreier sets forth the ideals and achievements of Shawn, whose artistic activities and explorations have covered a field which includes a considerable part of Europe, India, China, Java and Japan, and apparently every part of his own continent as well. The book is being published simultaneously in England, Germany and America.

JOAN SHARP.

A Four Years Course of Music. By Walford Davies. Macmillan and Co., Ltd. 7s. 6d. net. 1933.

1933 has produced an abundance of such musical courses, and most teachers in their first years should find it advantageous to have a ground mapped out by those of greater experience for the programme of a graduate is often too ambitious to yield the expected results. Sir Walford Davies' life has been a continuum of pedagogic experience, but his standard of assimilative power is still influenced by his long association with the exceptional Temple choir-boys.

These lessons are addressed to teachers of children of from seven to eleven in primary and preparatory schools, and are to be applied as circumstances direct. Musical apparatus desirable includes gramophone and wireless. In the introductory chapters emphasis is heavy on the need for 'joy' in learning and a sporting spirit in teamwork; children are to be organised in 'junior commands' the better to realise group discipline.

A reservoir of general knowledge and unflagging enthusiasm are presumed in the teachers. 'Do not consent to a dull moment' gives his psychological key, and 'The teacher may well liken the shapes of tunes to the shapes of flowers, plants or trees' illustrates his style of thinking and writing. On the whole, it looks as if some children might be overfed by this type of instruction. Few and plain words are sometimes more impressive than expansiveness. The book is beautifully got up.

L. HENDERSON WILLIAMS.

Jean de Reszke. By Clara Leiser. Gerald Howe. 18s.

Miss Clara Leiser is an American who does not appear from this book of 367 pages ever to have heard the de Reszkés sing or to have been a pupil or even an acquaintance. But she has delved indefatigably into all the Press criticisms of the years 1875 to 1902, she has read everything that has been written about his life, his acting and his teaching, she has interviewed or written to everyone who knew him personally or was a pupil of his, and she has made something out of this mass of material. "Something" sounds but a grudging word: but could anyone re-create the enthusiasms that the de Reszke brothers—for this is every bit as much a biography of Edouard as of Jean—called up in their endless triumphs in London, Paris and New York? The mere repetition of Press criticism will not do it, the flowers are faded and the lights are garish: nor can a Press critic—for the daily Press in particular—stay to analyse his emotions and his dissections or to synthesise them again in an article. Only in occasional glimpses, such as the anonymous letter written in 1896, do we see the man as he appeared to his real admirers: no wonder this letter was preserved, for it is a fine piece of genuine appreciation.

Jean de Reszke will always be an interesting figure even to those who neither heard him sing nor came beneath his spell as a teacher. He said of himself 'au fond j'avais une sale voix,' but by persistent careful systematic analysing work over years and years he came to the position which would never have been his by right of natural endowments. To those who look upon Art not as the lavish use of overwhelming natural powers, but as the trained expression of an emotion 'schooled and exercised' by every discipline of mind, Jean de Reszke will seem the only singer who can rightly be called their True Artist.

To most people the really intimate part of the book will be the last section where one begins to feel that the author is in touch at least at second hand with her subject, and in this section she has done some admirable compression which would have been valuable in the earlier sections. In a book where so much skill has been used it is rather distressing to come across such phrases as 'the hairy embellishment' used to describe the burning question of whether Jean should shave his moustache for Siegfried. Nor is it good to read in a purple passage describing the beautiful attachment of Jean's favourite niece that she was with him 'when life was snuffed out.' But all these oddities of expression are as nothing compared to the description of Madame de Reszke as 'the woman' whom Jean 'felt more or less compelled to marry.' What excuse can there be for such a phrase?

This book is so fully documented that it may finally dispose of many legends about this remarkable Reszke family. Two legends in particular may be regarded now as scotched, if not killed; first that Jean made a fortune through the use of his name on the Milhof cigarettes, second that Edouard died of starvation during the war. It might be useful to add, in view of some newspaper paragraphs this summer, that Edouard did not leave a son who sings, disguised, in a London cabaret.

The facts in this book can be believed when the documentation is given, or when they rest upon the authority of Amherst Webber, who writes a preface and has exercised some degree of control over the

book, or of Walter Johnstone Douglas, both of whom were intimately connected with the de Reszkes. But it taxes our belief in them to the utmost if they will substantiate the story told on page 220, that the de Reszkes refused to sing in 1895 at Bayreuth because Queen Alexandra, then Princess of Wales, made them promise not to sing for the 'horrid old Kaiser.'

As we read this book we seemed once again to take leave of that noble old man and to feel the impression of power and devotion to the unattainable that his lessons invariably gave. It is even more tragical to reflect that a simple attack of bronchitis and the confused opinions of eight eminent French specialists should have cost prematurely a life which might have been prolonged by the simpler attentions of an ordinary trained nurse. Devotion could do no more than his faithful Louis Vachet did, but devotion does not make up for training.

One part of his life seems altogether omitted, the period after his retirement from the Opéra in Paris in 1902, when he was made an artistic director, nominally to assist in choosing the cast and in directing the production. It was a complete failure owing to the incessant opera-house intrigues and jealousies. Louis Vachet, in describing this period to the present reviewer, told how Jean would indicate his wishes for the casting and mention names for the smaller rôles 'mais il y avait toujours la maîtresse de quelqu'un à se faire entendre,' and so the plans so carefully elaborated came to nought. This was said without malice, merely as a natural comment on how opera houses are managed 'over there.'

STEUART WILSON.

Proceedings of the Musical Association. Fifty-ninth session, 1932-1933. Leeds: Whitehead & Miller, Ltd. One guinea net.

The practising musician who takes up this reprint of lectures delivered to the Musical Association, might ask what gain is to be derived from his contact with musical research. It may not be immediately apparent. For while the aim of researchers and historians is, in a word, to develop a wider artistic consciousness, there are certain subjects for research where the primary interest is not the music itself, but a problem of sociology or psychology in which music has a function. Such is the case of Byzantine music. Professor Wellesz makes a valuable contribution to the study of Byzantine culture; but his conviction that Byzantine music is great can only be shared by those who will ferret out a few ecclesiastical fragments. Similarly, the lecture on musical practices of African tribes (Professor Kirby) will appeal, particularly, to the musical educationist. In the 'Apprehension and Cognition of Music,' Dr. Vernon gives a lucid account of how a psychologist measures and classifies musical perception. This is the obscure region where music and psychology overlap and where scientific experiment has only begun. But when the field has been investigated it will not only provide data for the psychologist; it will help the musician, too, to a keener realisation of his own feelings and consequently, as Professor Dent points out, to a greater power of concentration and imagination. To perceive music clearly is the first requisite of any musician, and this is the point to

which Professor Dent returns at the end of his lecture on the early romantic composers. 'If the study of musical history has any practical value,' he says, 'it is in the training of the imagination.' And so it is that the 'musical anatomist' of Weber and Berlioz leads us, like the psychologist, to a more penetrating criticism—of others—and eventually of ourselves.

E. LOCKSPEISER.

Meine Erinnerungen an Anton Bruckner. Von Max von Oberleithner. Gustav Bosse Verlag, Regensburg. pp. 80. (Von deutscher Musik, Band 38.)

A gift for story-telling, tinted with the sentimentalism of old Vienna, is what appeals in this little book. In this diverting manner one can flit from the class-room to the café, take a stroll in the gardens, assign the proper places to Brahms, Bruckner and Wagner in posterity, and still not forget what the wine-boy said about Pilsner beer. But such alertness makes the person of Bruckner appear the more ponderous and cloggy; and there is more than a flash of irony in such unhurried descriptions of Bruckner's love-making. . . . But here, as we read of Bruckner's organ-playing, there is a hint that the texture of his music is derivative of a certain organ style. Hanslick said he composed like a drunkard. Certainly the taut chromaticism of Wagner and Brahms meant nothing to him, whatever his admirers in Vienna and Munich may claim. In this country, so far as we may judge from a perusal of his scores and an occasional performance, his music creates just that impression of a rather objectless organ fantasia running to unwieldy lengths.

E. LOCKSPEISER.

Oeuvres Complètes de François Couperin. Editions de l'Oiseau Lyre. Chez Louise B. M. Dyer. Paris. Vol. I. Oeuvres didactiques. Vol. II. Musique de clavecin.

This sumptuous edition of the works of Couperin must earn the gratitude of scholar and historian for the publisher and the editor who offer us an opportunity of seeing the composer and his work not as he appears after two centuries of changes but as he was. The Couperin of the complete works is a different being from the composer of the three or four pieces that are now heard in the concert room.

This is not to say that he is unduly ignored. We cannot help being of our own age any more than he could avoid being of his, and it would be absurd to pretend that his music has not dated to some extent. Those embellishments which were his particular care, those 'agrément's' J. S. Bach studied so carefully, fit well enough the short design of the courante, the gigue, the sarabande. They are apt to surfeit the appetite of a generation that has grown in the contemplation of more comprehensive forms.

Couperin's own contributions to the development of form are, of course, very far from negligible. But his essays in this province, while leading to a type of enduring quality, were not destined to endure themselves. Compared with his great successors he remains the represen-

tative of an era which had not plumbed the depths music was to touch. Nor is there in his music that burning spirit which has kept pure and whole the art of still earlier times. His place is amongst the masters—not the greatest masters; a musician to love rather than venerate. That he was greater than the amateur to-day realises, the most cursory reading of these volumes is more than sufficient to prove. The very titles of the clavecin pieces bear evidence to a desire to do more than spin together pleasing sound. Was 'Manon' meant to be a portrait of l'abbé Prévost's heroine? Was he feeling the first stirring of a love of local colour when he composed 'Bourbonnaise' or 'Les plaisirs de Saint Germain en Haye'?

Greater things have since obscured these early attempts and their significance is purely a matter of conjecture. More important is the 'Règle pour l'accompagnement' included in the first volume of the new edition. But these fifteen pages cannot for a moment stand comparison with, say, Bach's 'Kunst der Fuge.' Yet Couperin was a keen observer and a teacher for whom the youngest student appears to have been the greatest care. There is evidence of this in 'L'Art de toucher le clavecin,' where we find shrewd remarks side by side with observations which no longer apply. He notes, for instance, the difference between Italian and French interpreters and composers, the latter using and expecting far greater freedom of rhythm and latitude than the former—and this remains true to some extent to-day. He recommends naïvely clavecin players to play sentimental music more quickly than violinists since the clavecin does not hold sounds long enough—and this, though strictly logical, is apt to startle the modern. Every line shows the teacher expert in the training of young and old, giving valuable advice on touch, fingering, stance, position of hands and feet, noting even the curious habit of some players of making faces while playing and suggesting a mirror conveniently placed on the desk as an effective cure. A painstaking teacher and a painstaking composer.

F. BONAVIA.

Dizionario di Musica. A della Corte and C. M. Gatti. Third edition.
G. B. Paravia and Co.

Here is a popular one-volume encyclopaedia with many illustrations and over six hundred pages in double column. The compilers declare in their preface that they have purposely confined themselves to facts and events, omitting all *giudizio critico*. The principal composers are given short biographies in addition to complete lists of works; the lesser names merely relevant dates and significant compositions. An enormous field is covered in comparatively small compass; yet one cannot help feeling that for popular use some little-known composers about whom the recorded information is extremely meagre might have been omitted in favour of more serious biographical, if not critical, study of the leading figures. One rather begrudges the space taken, for instance, in imparting the news that one composer 'was born in 1874 and has composed symphonic and chamber music and theatre pieces.'

The type and format are pleasing. The illustrations—for the most part reproductions of prints and oil paintings often interesting and

of artistic merit in themselves—are not so useful as they might be, since the exigencies of space make nine composers to a page the general rule, and on so small a scale there is little facial difference between Purcell and Rameau, Rossini and Meyerbeer. One realises that the age of full-bottomed wigs has given place to the age of side-whiskers, and that is about all. The instrumental illustrations, however, like the technical articles, are generally more illuminating than the personal ones.

M. R. BONAVIA.

The European Vogue of Favart: The Diffusion of the Opéra-Comique.
By Alfred Iacuzzi. Publications of the Institute of French Studies,
Inc., New York.

A vast amount of time and patient research must have been devoted to the compilation of this voluminous book on Charles Simon Favart, author, manager and singing comedian, who, with his no less industrious spouse, the celebrated Mme. Favart, filled so prominent a place in the French theatre of the mid-eighteenth century. Beyond the name, it is astonishing how little of his busy life-work, his remarkable versatility, his genius for inventing and adapting plots of the lighter type, is known to contemporary students of stage literature. Yet in 1758 Favart was appointed director of the Paris Opéra-Comique, at one of the most brilliant periods in its history—the era in which the fusion between French and Italian music was realised and the superiority of the musical element was established. Eschewing witty vaudevilles for more solid stuff, he produced in 1763 his piece 'L'Anglois à Bordeaux,' which he wrote at the King's command to celebrate the treaty of peace; it was 'a huge success.' Many of his plots are given in detail and should be useful. A good index and a long bibliography add to the value of a painstaking and comprehensive work.

HERMAN KLEIN.

Wandlungen der Oper. By Paul Bekker. 182 pp. Orell Füssli
Verlag, Zürich and Leipzig. 4 f.; 3.20 M.

The considered viewpoint of an experienced critic like Herr Paul Bekker is worth having, even though the subject matter be as well worn, not to say stale, as that of opera. Happily, too, the survey does not make too wide a sweep. From Gluck down to the present time brings within reasonable limits the study of the changes (or transformations) that opera has undergone during the most eventful period in its history. In the main the story is well told and undeniably interesting; its immediate purpose to establish the supreme importance of the human voice in the evolution of the lyric drama. Herr Bekker's text at the very outset is 'In the beginning was the Voice. Voice is the sounding breath, the tonal manifestation of life.' He perceives in it the mirror that reflects every shade, every variation in mankind's personality. 'Song is music, though music may not be essentially song.' Hence did song chiefly prevail in the early serious operas,

such as those of Gluck and Mozart. In them what mattered was that everything sung should sound as beautiful as it possibly could. Analysis shows how completely these masters meant their singers to portray every phase in the dramatic action and the characterisation. In a third section German opera is dealt with; in a later one French; and so we come to Wagner—'Die Zeit war erfüllt'—who occupies his fair but not excessive share in the author's scheme. With Wagner began for the first time the advancement of the woman's voice to leading place in the drama, hitherto filled by Mozart and others with the man's (*sic*). Italy followed suit through Verdi, while France was developing 'lyric opera' through Gounod, Ambroise Thomas, Saint-Saëns, Bizet, etc., down to Debussy, with whom died the last of the great race of Latin-Gallic composers. The later moderns, says Herr Bekker, brought to opera little that was new, either in ideas or in the function of the singer. And this sounds very near the truth.

HERMAN KLEIN.

Word and Tone. By C. Kennedy Scott. Dent. 2 vols. 5s. and 7s. 6d.

The ideal book on singing—if such a thing could ever be written—would state in unmistakable terms what singing is, and would give us the greatest possible information as to the quickest and best way to sing with ease and economy of effort. Mr. Kennedy Scott in his two volumes fulfils the first requirement quite well. He hits the nail on the head when he states that the voice is not intended primarily to be a musical instrument, but a medium for the transmission of words. I do not agree with him when, in following out this idea, he says, 'The majority of songs are almost if not quite as good played as sung, because they are not in a pure vocal style—they do not proceed from the word to the music, but rather from the music to the word.' Taken literally this would mean that a good song should not sound well when played. This would condemn all the great lieder. I don't for a moment believe that Mr. Scott intended to do this, but I rather suspect that he, like myself and other musicians, has had more experience of teaching people by word of mouth than of putting down on paper exactly what he means. When one thinks of the sort of people into whose hands his book might fall it makes one tremble for the result, for when he gets to the second requirement—telling us how to sing—he becomes really dangerous. On the subject of breathing he says, 'Two common actions serve best, perhaps, to exhibit the principles of inspiration and expiration in their most vital and energetic form: sighing and the act of retching (or vomiting).' One can well imagine some aspirant trying to acquire the right method of breathing by taking this to heart. To quote again, 'Here the expiration muscles give the necessary thrust to the tone and the inspiratory muscles check and control it to qualities of heart and beauty—each set of muscles moderating the exaggerated use of the other.'

Surely all clumsiness results from just this type of muscular action, and half one's trouble is the result of the inability to freely relax one muscle or set of muscles when using the opposite. Moreover, why

should there be any exaggeration? One more quotation: 'We speak of ease in singing, but in truth the way of fine tone is never really easy. It means a mighty and continuous movement of both our spiritual and physical powers, though art lies in concealing this.'

Yes, it does mean a mighty effort at a mighty climax, but that is not difficult, it is most enjoyable. But to say that fine tone is never obtained easily! The truth is exactly the opposite, laboured tone is always ugly.

The second volume begins with some excellent advice about deportment and facial expression. Then follow the usual diagrams of one's inside. They are to be found in most books of this class, but I have never yet met a singer who received any benefit from studying them.

Finally comes a series of exercises. Now every singing exercise I ever saw was either a scale or an arpeggio or a mixture of the two. But it seems a waste of space to print them all. If students are told to practice scales and arpeggios on all vowel sounds that is sufficient. At all events, such soul destroying things as the monotoning of 'Pee, pay, pah, paw, poh, poo; chee, chay, chah, chaw, choh, choo,' etc., can be very well dispensed with. All these sounds can be learned from songs in which musicianship is being acquired at the same time as vocal technique.

EDWARD C. BAIRSTOW.

Giacomo Puccini. By Richard Specht. Translated by Catherine Alison Phillips. J. M. Dent & Sons.

In spite of his German habit of universalising quite mundane matters into lofty abstractions and so obscuring his style with loose metaphysics, Herr Specht's biographies of the nineteenth century composers find an increasing number of English readers. Hard on the heels of his 'Beethoven' comes his 'Puccini' in an easy-running English translation. And the reason is that he is a good biographer: he has an eye both for what is significant and for what is merely salient. He notes, for example, that Puccini kept a hat on his head with a curiously unnecessary persistence. This is of no significance (save perhaps to a psycho-analyst), but it is a salient characteristic which brings the man alive to the reader with verisimilitude. On the other hand, half a dozen minor traits bear witness to the fact that it is not chance but a streak of sadism which brings physical cruelty and a certain type of woman into Puccini's operas. He is right a hundred times in insisting that a composer's choice of librettos reveals the man.

Quite untruly and in flat contradiction to the whole of the story he has just told so well, Herr Specht writes on his last page, 'He was a musician and therefore expressed his true nature in his music only.' The word 'true' is a question-begging epithet in such a context. A man's 'true' nature is the sum total of himself and his works—nothing less. Owing to our constitution we are all a sum of opposing characteristics: the glands which determine our traits, check and balance one another and the factors in our consciousness are compensated with their opposites in the subconscious. Art may be an expression of the overt or of the covert tendencies. No detail therefore

of a man's life is irrelevant to his biographer. Old fashioned biography concerned itself, for intelligible reasons, with a man's public acts—a method that might be adequate for a politician, but not for a musician who writes his works out of the inner recesses of his heart. Although Specht is not free from the great temptation of this kind of biography—that of filling in gaps in his knowledge of his subject's inner life with 'probably . . .'—he is aware that a composer's private life is more important than his public in throwing light on his music.

He is, moreover, a critical biographer. In the present case his point of view has been determined by the contemptuous attitude of German musicians and critics for one who did not 'scan eternity with a questioning gaze.' He is concerned to show to those who, as he says, cannot believe a work to be good unless it is boring, that there are more sorts of good than one and that small things have their value. His remarks, in fact, on Puccini's music are just.

FRANK HOWES.

Here and There with Birds. E. W. Hendy. Cape. 7s. 6d.

Mr. Hendy is by now well known for his books to those who follow the ways of birds. The question as between their music and ours is not so boldly raised in this book as it was in his *Lure of Bird-Watching*, when he took the woodlark as his text. But there is a chapter on bird cries and calls, 'The Small-talk of Birds.' We may not expect to imitate birds successfully, because, says Mr. Hendy categorically, 'we have no syrinx.' He does not define, but probably all who read the chapter will have seen diagrams of that exiguous vocal apparatus. Whether he is right or not, the mutual admiration society of birds and man will go on and will involve mutual mimicries. The main question was handled in this Review in October, 1920, and July, 1927, but was, perhaps, not much advanced, though Sir Charles Stanford had a hand in it.

Of birds in the ordinary way, cuckoos customarily and blackbirds quite often utter sounds within our scale. Most feathered quiristers sing outside it. Hence all these are efforts to transcend our lack of a syrinx. But one Syrinx at least, as Pan found, was a perfectly good nymph. And Mr. Hendy is a perfectly good (and less disconcerting) guide into his leafy and reedy academies of song. He knows where the singers are, and the songs of them all, and he may be trusted.

W. M. MARSDEN.

A New Theory of Fingering. (Paganini and his secret.) By Albert Jarosy. English version by Seymour Whinyates. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd. 8s. net. 1933.

The book is dedicated to Miss Seymour Whinyates. Of the merits of her translation I am incompetent to speak, especially as literature is evidently not M. Jarosy's field. But it would be a pity if the flamboyant style of the first two chapters put serious violinists off as, when we come to examples of fingering of special passages, he stands firmly on his chosen ground. Paganini's 'secrets,' as stated, are

regard to 'the natural fall of the fingers,' 'a uniform fingering for all scales,' and a particular use of the little finger. The matters touched are well worth consideration. The little book is cheap and well produced, but the actual fingerings might be more sharply printed.

L. HENDERSON WILLIAMS.

A Secondary School Music Course. By M. Maitland Watson. Boosey and Co., Ltd. 5s. net. 1933.

This is Vol. I of the First Year in a course for boys and girls wishing to take music as a subject for matriculation. At first glance the opening suggested rather an elementary standard. But reading steadily through it, one was surprised to find what a wide knowledge of music must be acquired by any intelligent pupil at the end of the three terms. The introduction to counterpoint is excellent. Mrs. Watson has used the simplest language with skill and economy. Moreover, every lesson in the second and third terms is designed to develop individual creative activity, if existent. As a thoroughly practical course it should commend itself to 'Heads,' become wary of musical fanatics.

L. HENDERSON WILLIAMS.

The Evolution of the Six-Four Chord. A chapter in the History of Dissonance Treatment. By Glen Haydon, Assistant Professor of Music in the University of California. University of California Press. 1933.

The period covered by this study is one of some five centuries from the beginnings of polyphonic experiment to the close of the great polyphonic epoch (twelfth to seventeenth centuries). During this time experiment in dissonance, or for that matter in consonance or in rhythm, gradually gave place to a system of rules and classifications, so that the six-four chord, for example, because of its ambiguous nature which rendered conventionality of treatment more and more desirable as the interest in artistic form grew greater, is found by the seventeenth century to have crystallised into the two main forms now generally recognised by theorists. The very copious examples and references contribute greatly to the value of the book, and the author has done great service by searching out a large number of examples, both typical and exceptional, which display in particular the ways in which other and more dissonant elements were employed along with the six-four chord, especially in cadential formulae. Special attention is given to examples from the early Netherland composers, Palestrina, the English madrigalists and Monteverdi.

DONALD PEART.

Narciso Garay: Tradiciones y Cantares de Panamá. Expansion Belge.

As its title indicates Sr. Garay's book deals principally with the folklore and folk-music of the Central American Republic of Panama. He describes with a wealth of irrelevant detail his ethnographical

expeditions to the San Blas district and among the Guaymi and Cuna Indians, and prints a number of musical examples noted with the aid of a recording apparatus of the old phonographic type registering on wax cylinders. Of this music and of the customs which he describes some is purely Indian in character, but more is strongly affected by Hispanic influences. While the discursive manner in which the book is written and its frequent digressions make its perusal somewhat unremitting, it contains material of value as an original contribution to the ethnography of Central America and continues, in this respect, the author's earlier work in Columbia and Baron Nordenskjold's research in the same field (cf. Vol. 7 of his *Studies in Comparative Ethnology*). The book is well illustrated with photographs and coloured reproductions, but would have gained by a more methodical presentation of the material and by its condensation.

RODNEY GALLOP.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

The following abbreviations are used: [Eu] Eulenburg, [Au] Augener, [Ch] Chester, [O] Oxford University Press, [Ha] Hawkes, [K.P.] Keith Prowse, [W.R.] Winthrop Rogers.

Works for Strings

M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco. *Sea murmurs. Tango.* Two of the set of Shakespeare songs arranged for violin and pianoforte by Jascha Heifetz. His work on them is effective. [Ch]

Bridge, Frank. *Sonata for violin and pianoforte.* This work, in a number of sections, is played without a break. The writing is both interesting and difficult for either instrument. Performers will have to be of more than average capability and to possess a good sense of balance in ensemble. The manner of writing is cohesive and comprehensible. The style is harmonically that of a man who is aware of the latest developments in Europe, takes from them what is germane to his purpose, and uses them with great skill and equally great tact. For though there are things to surprise here there is nothing to offend the listener who would rather progress from the classics to the present time than suddenly be precipitated into the day after to-morrow. [Au]

Ferguson, Howard. *Sonata for violin and pianoforte.* Three movements, the first with a cadenza which is remembered as being effective, the second a less successful scherzo, the last starting well with a bold outline. There is interesting matter in each movement. The use of accompanying figures should be noted (the wavering semiquavers in p. 1, last two bars) as an element of style, significant solely as such. For performance the work is of moderate difficulty. It will require players who can recognise and enjoy the quiet beauties of a poetic conception. [Ha]

Morris, R. O. *Suite for violoncello and orchestra (pianoforte score).* One plays this through and afterwards sits down with it and reads it. Perhaps the latter is the better way, though then one would like to have the full orchestral score. For it is music filled with turns of thought. Thought informs it all and the mind realises the reasons for what may sound dry when being played. There are four movements, and in the third, called Romance, there is a melody that has to be played again for pleasure in it. We may call this work brain-music; but that is no use to us if we want to differentiate it from equally well written music that has more seeming purpose and individuality. It is what some accuse Brahms of—letting the brain do the work that the heart has abandoned. Besides, why should we grumble if a good brain, as here, lets us follow its thinking? This is excellent stuff. If we don't want it at the moment we must let it lie until satiety of other things sends us back to it. [O]

Röntgen, Julius. *Seven concert pieces.* A suite for violin and pianoforte. The concert for which it is meant is, therefore, a chamber concert and an audience contented with gentle pleasures. The little

Terschelling dance is a good example of what this volume contains. It is neat work. [O]

Rootham, Cyril Bradley. *Trio for violin, violoncello and pianoforte.* In this, too, a sound musical intelligence has been busy. The result is three movements of musicianly composition, with nothing striking in the material chosen, nothing new in the method adopted, and at the same time nothing that is not in the best tradition of its period. [O]

Somervell, Arthur. *Concerto in G minor for violin and orchestra* (pianoforte score). Those who remember the composer's 'Thalassa' symphony (1913) will find in this admirable violin concerto something of the same flowing grace and sturdy purposefulness. In the slow movement, again, there is a lyric quality similar to that of the 'Shropshire Lad' song-cycle. There are three movements. A capable violinist should find no difficulty as regards technique in the playing of them.

Mozart. *The violin sonatas and variations.* A new edition, prepared by Dr. Bernhard Paumgartner from the original manuscripts, where they exist, and otherwise from the earliest printed editions. (Universal edition.)

Organ

Bach. *Contrapunctus I; Contrapunctus III from the Art of Fugue.* Transcriptions by Vernon Butcher. These are well suited to the organ. The wonder is that apparently they have not reached it. The third contrapunctus needs very delicate foot work (no pedal stops, only couplers to manuals). [O]

Elgar, Edward. *Second organ sonata.* A new edition by Ivor Atkins. It starts and ends *pomposo*. It is recognisably Elgar. [K.P.]

Whitlock, Percy. *Four extemporisations.* An extemporation may be called a wandering of the thoughts given some immediate form in art. In the first of these four pieces the composer seems to have been thinking the same thoughts Delius so often has thought, and as a result there is a movement in pastoral time, liltting along, with caressing, indecisive harmonies. But that may be beside the point, except for the description of the style, which is sufficiently near the truth. For the rest it will suffice to leave the reader to make up his mind about the three other movements, and it will be worth his while to make the trial, for this music is by no means negligible. [O]

Solo voices and orchestra

Delius. *Idyll.* The words are adapted from Walt Whitman. It is important to realise this fact. Compare, for instance, the version fabricated for this musical setting of the lines 'I love you, before long I die' with the original ('Leaves of Grass.' Philadelphia: David McKay, 1900). Great freedom has evidently been taken in choosing a line here, another there, and forming a sort of patchwork. The music, on the other hand, is all of one piece. It has great beauty of the suave, Delius type, every chord indecisive and capable of being turned one of two ways, one neither knows nor much minds which, so long as the pattern continues in sound. This, at least, could never be accused of being intellectualised music. It is all pure feeling and seems (one can say no more) to be instinct and intuition of the happiest kind. [W.R.]

Pianoforte and orchestra

Gebhardt, Rio. *Concerto in E flat for pianoforte and jazz orchestra.* Those who remember Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' (it can possibly still be heard, and at any rate there is sure to be a gramophone record) will understand when this concerto is described as the same only not so good. There are the same tame harmonies done to death in sequences that lead nowhere but to the inevitable, the same nostalgic saxophone cries, the same smart broken rhythms, the same complete lack of individuality. The scraps of tune are not so good as Gershwin's and the whole is more pretentious. It is timed to last for twelve minutes. But it needn't. [Zimmerman, Leipzig.]

Miniature orchestral scores

Bach. Cantatas: *Ich hatte viel Bekümmernis. Preise, Jerusalem, den Herrn.* This welcome reprint of the cantatas in a handy form continues, with the same excellent clear print and general lay-out. [Eu]

Delius: *Eventyr.* The sub-title is 'Once upon a time.' It is one of the lesser-known Delius works, scored for an outsize in orchestras (with sarrusophone), founded on Scandinavian folklore, dating from 1917 (thus fairly late, and except for the violoncello concerto the last big orchestral work to appear). The print of this score is clear, though verging on difficulty for ordinary eyes. [Au]

John Ireland: *Pianoforte concerto in E flat major.* This work has received a great deal of public performance and is probably the best known of Ireland's larger compositions. A miniature score has long been wanted, and the present one has its uses. But the print is extremely small, a wonder of photography (which is what we gather the process to have been), but defeating its own ends by being so immediate a strain on the sight. [Ch]

Mozart: *Violin concerto in D major. Violin concerto in B flat.* Two further additions to the Mozart works in this well-printed series of scores. [Eu]

SCOTT GODDARD.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

Orchestra

COLUMBIA. Balakirev: *Symphonic Poem 'Russia'* (the L.P.O. conducted by Sir Hamilton Hartley). This curious period piece can have little interest except for the historian. It is musically quite surprisingly dull and unenterprising. That such stuff should have fertilised the activities of the Russian national school is incredible, but it seems none the less to have been the case. While gratefully recognising the gesture of those who control the choice of what shall be recorded, one is chiefly glad this work has been recorded because now there is no need to do it again. The playing is excellent.

Beethoven: *Fifth Symphony* (the L.P.O. conducted by Felix Weingartner). The Fifth is probably the most recorded Beethoven symphony. We have had occasion in the past to remark not altogether kindly upon the multiplication of records of one work or another while

so many still remain unrecorded. Yet it must be owned that if pluralisation can result in the eventual publication of a record such as this of the Fifth Symphony, the principle is to that extent vindicated. For this record is, as far as we remember, just so much better than those that have appeared previously as to make it worth having produced and worth putting in their place. It is not only that the actual recording is better. That is accounted for by the general improvement in the mechanics of reproduction that has taken place within the last few years, and it is inevitable that a record of to-day, whatever its artistic quality, should be better than one of five years ago. But it is as an interpretation that the present record deserves to supersede its predecessors. Weingartner has been accused of coldness, of aloofness. But what are we to say to a rendering of a great classic that has been done to death by carelessness in performance, which puts the whole work once more in a reasonable light, the sort of light which illuminines it when the score is read in silence with only the memory of one admirable past performance to go by? That is the impression this recording leaves behind it.

Handel: *Suite from the Water Music* (the L.P.O. conducted by Sir Hamilton Harty, the arranger). This *musique d'occasion*, transformed by modern dress, stands transplantation from the open air of the river to the close atmosphere of the concert room, and the change from galumphing performance in a rocking barge to the many exquisite niceties of a first-rate orchestra, very amenably.

H.M.V. Beethoven: *Third pianoforte concerto* (the L.P.O. conducted by Dr. Malcolm Sargent, soloist Artur Schnabel). A very satisfactory piece of work. Almost inevitably one uses that locution, for his workmanlike attitude is what strikes one first about Mr. Schnabel. Later other characteristics become clear: the romanticism of that slackening in the slow movement, and the impetuous scurry of the semi-quavers in the last. These are things we have heard a score of times in his playing, and to hear them again on this record is to realise that it is a true reproduction. The orchestral accompaniment is orderly and neat, which is what is wanted in the circumstances.

Wagner: *Prelude to Act III, Meistersinger* (Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski). *Ausdrucks voll* is taken with complete literalness in the heavy downward portamenti of the string entries. The general effect is romantic and luscious, the playing good.

Opera

COLUMBIA. Puccini: *Madam Butterfly*. Six records, made by various Italian artists, among them Pampanini, with a chorus from La Scala and the Milan Symphony Orchestra conducted by Lorenzo Molajoli. The value of these lies in their being true to type. If tradition is worth anything, then this is the style of performance that should be placed on the market. The singing is extremely expert and the voices have the proper Italian quality, piercing and passionate. The orchestra accompanies rather tamely, though that, too, is more or less in the picture. The *ritornelli* have more personality.

Verdi: *Rigoletto* (artists from the same sources as above). Here again one has the feeling that the set of records is authoritative as only Italian methods could make it. The performance is on a level

with that of the previous opera reviewed here. Either is thoroughly to be recommended.

Solo Instrumental Performances

COLUMBIA. Bach: *Sonata in A minor for solo violin* (Joseph Szigeti). There are a few things that come so near to an imaginable perfection that the distinction between what they are and what they might be is hardly worth making. Of course, this is not everybody's music, and probably the record will not have a 'public.' Unaccompanied Bach is for the few. In the concert room the atmosphere is wrong for it. In the study, with only those to listen who want to do so (yourself alone, probably) the music has a chance. What more is needed? A first-class performance? Well, here it is.

Marais: *Prelude and Sarabande* (Mabel and Arnold Dolmetsch). Like the Italian opera records noticed above, this record, in most respects so different, has a similar quality of truth to type. No one who has heard a Haslemere concert will fail to recognise that this record is the real right thing. The music is rare, so the historian also will be pleased. On the reverse are other pieces, from various sources, for solo lyre viol.

H.M.V. Chopin: *The four scherzi* (Arthur Rubinstein). This is a truthful recording of Mr. Rubinstein's style of playing. Those who are sensitive to pace and like the bar-lines to pass regularly, whatever may happen between them, will question things here. The pianist is impetuous (it is his known method) and a group of quick quavers causes him to forsake all else and play ahead. That finished, back again to the old original pace. He does not give us that miracle of a Chopin ornament played in perfect time and made part of the whole scheme. What he does give is a display of technique which, taken by itself, is sufficiently astonishing. In each of these four scherzi there is something to take the breath away. The last will be the most welcome for many, because it seems to be less often played and is really one of the most attractive.

String Quartet

COLUMBIA. Hugo Wolf: *Italian Serenade* (the Lener Quartet). Grove (latest edition) says the orchestral version was 'a later version of an early string quartet.' Newman and Riemann give it the other way round, placing the string quartet as a later version of the orchestral work. Needless to say that the playing of this record is of the kind that one would not hesitate in commending to the notice of the most acute musical sensibility. The ensemble never is at variance, yet there is nothing rigid in it. The rhythm is exact yet always supple.

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